1. Chapter four focuses on children's literature beginning with the five important literary elements including characterization, plot, setting, theme, the author's style, and sometimes illustrations. Farris describes each of the five elements in detail and also summarizes each. Characterization is described as what the author reveals about an individual character. Plot is the action or story within the work. Setting, the third element, consists of time and place. Theme is described as being the central idea or point the author wishes to convey. Style involves the author's word choice and sentence structure as described by Farris. Lastly, the fifth element, illustrations are a support to the story by extending and reflecting on its meaning. The next part of the chapter discusses genres which refers to the different categories that comprise children's literature. Genres include traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, informational, and poetry. The next part focuses on multicultural literature. It is crucial as teachers that we consider the contributions of various racial and ethnic groups. It is important that multicultural literature is part of any classroom and with that comes criteria for selecting this type of literature. The literature should reflect books that represent culturally diverse groups and also avoid stereotypes, portray the cultural groups and their values in an authentic way, and use language that reflects standards set by local usage. It is also important to validate children's experience, broaden our vision, and invite reflection while using multicultural literature in the classroom. The chapter then goes on to discuss thematic units and the use of word webs. Literature circles, and essential part of any curriculum, are a hands-on approach that promotes reading and discussion. Some benefits include helping students converse about literature, sharing personal responses, and also help develop personal reading strategies and proficiency in responding to text in various ways. With literature circles, it is important to organize the activity by using methods and providing guidance to help the students as they work in literature circles. Some ways to organize literature circles are by read aloud, response and reaction, share, form groups, assign student roles, clarify student roles, assign reading, group meet and share, reconvene the class and debrief, and finally by using extension activities. Other ways to incorporate literature in the curriculum may also include using literature response journals and book talks.

2. "Through the sharing of stories, they develop a sense of community that follows them to enter into dialogue with each other. Dialogue involves thinking out loud with others so that their ideas and connections are considered reflectively and critically." (Kaser and Short) (page 165)

-I thought this quote has much importance and truth behind it regarding literature circles. Literature circles are a great way for all students to engage in conversation and discussion but also to help those students who are shy to become more involved.

3. I really enjoyed the poem on the title page of chapter four (page 117). It is crucial that as teachers, we involve students in literature as much as possible because unfortunately some students are not as exposed to reading at home as other students. It is also important to get students interested in literature because it is something they can take with them through their entire lives,

4. In reflection to the entire chapter, I thought this chapter was really filled with great examples of different books in the various genres and also gave great examples of word webs and thematic units. I loved going through the lists of different books according to genre and seeing which ones I have read and which one I would like to!

5. This chapter also discusses literature circles in depth. In my teaching reading course, we have also discussed literature circles. They are becoming more popular in the classrooms and along with being effective, they are a great way to get students involved!

Comments

1. I like your summary. It reflects good learning about lit. circles. Yes, we must, ",...help students converse about literature, share personal responses, and also help develop personal reading strategies and proficiency in
responding to text in various ways."

2. Yes, let's encourage students talking about the literature, just like today when we discuss *The Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting.

3. I agree, the poem *Read to Me* is very special and says a lot about great teaching.

4. I am pleased that you recognize the fine resource that your text is providing to you and your future career.

5. Exemplary teaching practice is based upon a spiraling curriculum where salient points are reviewed so they can be learned deeply and mastered. I am glad that you see the reviews between your course work.

1. Nice job summarizing this chapter. I like how you included the benefits of literature circles.

2. This is true. Some students just need the extra push from their peers to talk about their ideas.

3. I agree. I think we should read a book to our students as often as possible. I have seen a teacher read from a chapter book each morning and then read a story at the end of each day.

4. I also like that the lists of books were included. This is a great reference for us!

5. I remember learning about literature circles in Teaching Reading. It was the first time I have heard of them so I am glad that it reappeared in this text.

1. I like how you talk about multicultural literature in your summary and the criteria for selecting quality literature.

2. I think it is very important for students to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas with others.

3. I really liked the poem as well and agree when you say we need to expose children to literature as much as possible.

4. I love all the examples and resources Farris includes in her book. It is definitely worth keeping!

5. I have done literature circles in a few of my classes and it's great practice and reinforcement at the same time.

Melissa (permalink)
Created on Thursday, 06/05/2008 12:30 AM by Melissa

1. Reading children quality children's literature books is essential to their development of the language arts. The chapter begins by introducing aix important literary elements teachers must consider when choosing literature for the classroom. *Characterization* refers to what the author reveals about an individual character whether directly or
indirectly. Characters should be believable, having both good and bad qualities. The plot is the action of the story. It usually consists of conflict, intrigue and resolution. The setting refers to where and when the story takes place. The central idea or the point the author is trying to make is the theme. Style involves the author's word choice and sentence structure. Finally the illustrations support and extend upon the meaning of the text. There are also different types of genres for children's literature. Traditional literature is rooted in stories passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Modern fantasy brings children into a world where the unbelievable becomes believable. Contemporary realistic fiction refers to plot, setting and characters who are real but the theme of the book is fictitious. Historical fiction refers to fictitious plot, setting and characters but is based on a true historical event. Biographies autobiographies are nonfiction books written about someone else's life and autobiographies are the author's account of their own life. Informational works are nonfiction and how-to or reference books and poetry books are collections of poems by several different authors and of several different themes. Incorporating multicultural literature is essential in classrooms in order to present a wide variety of races and cultures and to make children aware of the diversity that exists in this world, especially in areas that are homogenous. There are several criteria for one to follow when selecting quality multicultural literature: the books should always avoid stereotypes, portray the cultural groups and their values in an authentic way, use language that reflects standards set by local usage, validate children's experience, broaden our vision, and finally they must invite reflection. The book then discusses thematic units and how they are an excellent way for children to focus on a specific idea. Thematic units are easy to make interdisciplinary and this makes them fun and interesting for the children to do. Finally the chapter talks about literature circles and their importance in the classroom. They get children involved in reading and promote discussions and cooperation among the groups of children in the circle as well as class-wide discussions. Literature circles are flexible and can last anywhere from a day to a week using both picture books as well as novels. They get everyone involved in the reading process and discussions because each member of the group have a specific role and job to do.

2. "Until recently, the overwhelming proportion of children's literature represented white middle-class America" (p 142). I chose this quote because it is something that I never really thought about until I took the literacy and diversity class here on campus. I never thought about the characters in books being diverse or the concepts being stereotypical until I took a closer look. It is so important to incorporate multicultural literature into classrooms because our classrooms are changing and becoming more diverse. It is important to include all different races and cultures in order to have an even representation of everyone. And for those areas that are not culturally diverse it is even more important to educate and make these children aware of all the different types of people that live in the world around us.

3. I really liked all of the examples of thematic units throughout the chapter because they serve as excellent examples for our unit that is coming up at the end of this summer session. They give a a lot of examples on how to make lessons interdisciplinary as well as interesting and fun for the children, as well as being educational.

4. The chapter also provides us with tons of examples of children's literature from multicultural, suggestions for literature for literature circles, books for emergent and beginning readers and finally books that could be used for thematic units. These are excellent pages to mark and keep track of because they are quality literature for children that we can start buying now in order to build quality children's literature libraries.

5. I never heard of Ruth Heller before today and I really enjoyed her books and can definately see how they would be beneficial in any elementary classroom to promote grammar instruction. These books include colorful pictures that would be attractive to children but they include concepts that are educational and all students need to know.

Comments

1. I love your summary. I agree, let's use quality books. Yes, students must be invited to actively engage in their own discussions of the literature and the circles allow this to happen.

2. Your selected quote and analysis is masterful. I have been asked to speak at the Keystone Reading Association's conference in October about multiculturalism in teaching children's literature. My presentation is titled: Cultural Journeys: Investigating Diversity in the Classroom. Yes, as Whites, we must meed the cultural and diverse aspects of our clients.
3. Thematic units encourage students to delve deeper and longer into subjects. Many a fine lesson has developed around a theme. Just be sure you know the difference between a theme and a topic. Themes cut across all curriculum, i.e., conflict, change, patterns are themes and topics are ideas that categorize and do not branch out into all curricular areas. Examples of topics would be: space, oceans, bugs, and specifics like the Civil War, China, etc.

4. I agree, a wonderful chapter to tab and refer back to for pertinent information and super ideas for lessons.

5. I am glad that I could introduce you to some fine materials for you to use in your future classroom.

julie

Thursday, 06/05/2008 11:38 AM by DAVID

julie (permalink)

Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 10:44 PM by Julie

1. Chapter 4 is all about children's literature. An approach to teaching this is through lit circles so small groups can discuss and interact with each other about the reading. Another is students telling how stories relate to reality. Characterization is an important literary element and gives children insight to different personalities and/or beliefs when discussing the development of a character. Plot, what the story is about, is another imperative element that gives action, conflicts and resolutions. Setting, referring to time and place the story occurs, is an element too. It is crucial when talking about some historical thing. The theme holds the core idea that the author wants to portray to his or her audience. Illustrations add too the meaning of the story. Some examples of picture books are fairy tales, and wordless picture books. Picture books are suited for all grade levels. Different categories of literature are genres. In traditional literature, there is a common theme of heroes and religion, as well as folktales and good versus evil. In modern fantasy the unbelievable becomes the believable. In contemporary realistic fiction, what is happening could actually happen in real life. There is als historical fiction, biographies, written about a person, and informational books, that explain the where to, why and how to do something. Poetry usually has rhymes and is very insightful. There is a note about multicultural literature and including minority groups. There is a lot of information about literature circles and starting grand conversations. The students should form groups and react to the reading. They are assigned roles like scene setter, discussion leader, character captain, critic, and summarizer. Make sure each understands their role. Debrief as a class. Response journals are wonderful for putting down predictions and thoughts about the story.

2. "Picture books offer examples of a wide variety of media. Children's aesthetic development can be enhanced through their exposure to illustrations done in acrylics, block prints, chalk, collage, ink, and watercolors" (p.130).

I like this because I love illustrations in books. The use of different mediums broadens children's artistic and imaginative horizons I think. It keeps things interesting and brains active. Plus, pictures just have a way of making you happy and bringing text to life.

3. I liked when you mentioned in class about the authors chair or rocking chair. I will have this for my classroom. I think having a specific comfy chair for the student who is reading their work is really nice. It will signal the class to pay attention to the reader when someone is there and I think it would be extra special for the person who is sharing their work.

4. I enjoyed the poem in the beginning of the chapter Read to Them. It really touched me and made me think how important an experience it is for children to have. I like the use of the word magic in the second paragraph. It is true when it says it is so much more than a vocabulary lesson.

5. I like the list of extension activities for literature circles. They give kinesthetic learners a chance to be active. The examples given give the students chances to show major creativity that they maybe did not even know they had and learn how to do things they did not know how to before. Videotapes, sculptures, murals, plays, et cetra add a whole new light to the classroom when doing projects.
1. Your summary focuses on the literature and how we must engage the students in lit. circles to develop conversations about the books. I like how also included a nod to multiculturalism and be inclusive. I will be speaking on this very topic at the Keystone Reading Association Conference in Gettysburg in October!

2. Yes, let's encourage our students to be happy. Picture books and their magical images can assist us in our mission to create an enjoyable learning environment.

3. This is a technique promoted by the National Writing Project (NWP). The author's chair helps everyone focus on the person who is reading. Guest speakers like it because it is comfortably informal and allows adults to speak at the level of the students.

4. The Read to Them poem is one of my favorites and I often end presentations to educators by reciting it. Many get tears in their eyes. The poem is superb and delves deep into the mission of most educators - if not you, who?

5. I love the aspect that Farris wants to provide us all with usable extension activities. Et cetera or etc. is Latin and is spelled as I have demonstrated for you.

Samantha (permalink)
Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 9:45 PM by Samantha

1. This chapter was about children's literature and opening windows to new words. Literature should not only be read to students, but also have the students read the literature themselves. Reading should not only be educational, but also enjoyable. When choosing literature, there are five important literary elements to consider--characterization; plot; setting, both time and place; theme; author's style and for picture books and some informational books, illustrations. Research findings suggest that children who were read to at home while they were still preschoolers have an advantage in terms of literary development over those peers who were not read to at home. Different categories that comprise children's literature are called genres. These include tradtional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography and autobiography, informational books, and poetry. Multicultural literature is the next topic. Teachers need to consider the contributions of various racial and ethnic groups when selecting children's literature. The criteria for choosing multicultural literature are listed on the next page. Literature circles have becoming very popular over the last couple of years. Many valuable literature discussions can occur during these sessions. Literature response journals were next introduced. I found these to be very similar to the class room journals we use now.

2. "The content of children's literature can expand a child's knowledge and understanding of the surrounding world" (p.121). I chose this quote because it holds so true. The first glimpse of the world around us usually comes from reading. Children many times first learn about different ethics, cultures, and religions through literature.

3. Today we were able to experience some examples of Dr.Walker's former class's class journal. It was interesting to get their grades and not only hear what they had to say but also see their different handwritings. It was cute to see what the children wrote. Not only what they learned and did in the classroom but one girl even wrote about play Mario Kart. It was nice and exciting to see a hands-on example of a classroom journal from children.

4. The graphic organizer we did today I thought was a great idea. It's amazing to see what you can do with one sheet of paper. I thought it was very clever and think the students will definitely get much from it. I look forward to using it in my classroom.
5. Dr. Walker introduced us to the Ruth Heller books today. I found them to be full of great material that can really benefit the class. Like many of us said, we even learned a thing or two from the books. They are a great guide to just about anything you need to know in the Language Arts. The summary was also a great idea in the back of the book. Not to mention the illustrations I thought were amazing. They definitely got my attention and I'm sure the students will benefit just as much from them, if not more.

Comments

1. Your summary is quite masterful. Yes, the lit. response journal are similar to what we are using. I love your wording that this chapter is like, "...opening windows to new words." A fine simile that expresses the purpose of developing literate people.

2. Yes, the students do learn so much about the world through books.

3. Thank you for your kind words relating to my sharing of authentic student writing. I am pleased it was inspirational and a fun aspect to your learning.

4. An easy way to show students that they can create a tool that will help them learn to read better. The tool also helps teachers focus on student needs, too.

5. That's the ticket, grab their attention. The Heller books do just that and are filled with meaningful and challenging language arts concepts. Books to grow on.

Ashley Post on June 4 2008 (permalink)
Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 9:23 PM by Ashley

1. Chapter 4 is about children's literature. There are six literary elements. Characterization which is very important because this allows the child to identify with the character(s). Next is plot. This is what the story is about. Most times there is an action, a conflict, intrigue and resolution. The plot should be realized towards the beginning of the story and the conflict introduced after the student knows something about the characters. Of course, the resolution is at the end. There are four different types of plot conflict. 1) person against person 2) person against nature 3) person against self and 4) person against society. Setting is time and place. Theme is the central idea of the story. It is the message that the author is trying to deliver to the reader. Style is the word choice in which rhyme is sometimes used. Finally, Illustrations provide further meaning to the story. If illustrations do not capture a young readers attention, the child will become uninterested. The next thing the chapter talks about is picture books. Being a picture book doesn't mean there aren't any words. There are some books that contain pictures and words. There are different genres for children's literature pieces. They include, traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography and autobiography, informational books, and poetry. The next topic is Multicultural Literature. When dealing with types of situations it is important to make sure that everyone is being acknowledged. When different pieces of literature are shared, children become aware and more sensitive to those of different cultures. This is also a great opportunity to clear up any stereotypes, etc. In the upper elementary and middle schools, teachers should incorporate the five-phase model for studying the multicultural literature. 1) literature of varying genres 2) traditional tales from one area 3) autobiographies, biographies, and historical nonfiction 4) historical fiction and 5) contemporary fiction and poetry. A thematic unit is a unit developed around one particular topic, for example, turtles. These units can be used in any subject area. The last main thing that is discussed is really awesome! Literature circles are groups of students in the classroom who are all reading the same piece of material. In this group, feelings, reactions, and responses are shared. By the students conversing together, everyone is able to get different perspectives and learn. For meeting the needs of bilingual readers, the chapter suggested a great idea. Divide the class into language groups. Read the same story
to each group and for instance both in Spanish and in English. It is also possible to tape record the stories so the students can use them later on. Word walls can also be added showing the Spanish and English words. The chapter also touches on read alouds and lastly mentioned literature response journals. I believe this is another great idea. The student can keep a journal and write down how they felt, what they liked and didn't like and other things they would like to add about the piece.

2. "...the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills eventually required for reading appears to be reading aloud to children" (pg. 120).

We all know how important this is. By reading to children we are able to model not only how to read, but we are able to add so much more emotion to a story than most are capable at that moment, especially for the younger ones. As soon as we all become teachers, I believe that it is very important that one of the first things we do at the beginning of the year is let all of our parents know that they should read to their children every chance they get. Granted most don't have that kind of time, but even one story a day would make a difference.

3. On pg. 165 it mentioned that with literature circles sometimes it could last for a day on picture books or basal readers and possibly two to three weeks on novels. It also says that a circle could last for one to two hours depending on reading levels, reading ability, etc. What class has one to two hours to spare? Most subject areas last about 45 minutes before the students are to be somewhere else. Perhaps this could be clarified.

4. I enjoyed the books today by Ruth Heller. It's a fun and easy way to talk about the parts of speech. The only problem I had with the books was the overwhelming information on some one the pages. It was easy for me to understand but for children in elementary school, it may be difficult.

5. The reading we did at the end of class today was crazy. Reading the information I literally felt like an idiot because I couldn't get past the first paragraph before I said "WHAT?". I believe that was the point exactly to demonstrate to us of children feel when given information that may be inappropriate for them. I did like the foldable, however. I believe this could work for any grade level.

Comments

1. Your summary is very complete and well-organized. This is a super important chapter that relates to so much of what teachers do to build students' literary skills. Tab it is use it often.

2. Be sure the parents know to read aloud to their children and encourage them to truly do it. Be the example and read aloud often and use the best literature and vary the genres.

3. Literature Circles frequently spill over into other days. Most schools have a two-hour block for literacy/LA/writing. Use the time wisely and allow for deep learning to occur. Students in groups with delve into the literature, develop social networks, and realize greater understandings when encouraged to conduct lit. circles. If you are not familiar with this methodology, you may wish to investigate it further on your own. I will also be covering it in class at a later time.

4. Challenging material that leads to learning and a deeper understanding is good for children. Do not set the bar of learning too low. Research states that teachers who set high expectations have students who have better achievement than teachers who do not set high expectations.

5. The exercise was to make you feel like a child who is grappling with challenging reading. The graphic organizer, foldable, can be helpful in leading students out of their confusion and actually helps the teacher to see where the learning needs support or direct instruction.
1. Your summary touches on all the main points very well along with being very well organized. I loved how you bolded certain words and used italics!

2. I definitely agree with the quote you chose. I also think it is really unfortunate and sad for children who are rarely or never read to at home. That is why as teachers we really need to incorporate the importance of literature in the classroom.

3. I actually thought the same thing when reading about literature circles. It seems like teachers barely have enough time to complete certain tasks throughout the day.

4. It was the first time I had ever seen book by Ruth Heller. I enjoyed them as well and even though they did seem challenging it a great way to review the part of speech, even for me!

5. I'm glad I wasn't the only one who had trouble with that article! The important part was that we learned the activity that went along with it which is great to use in our classrooms to help the students who are confused or to sort out their thoughts!

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Post on June 4 2008 (permalink)

Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 8:10 PM by Kylie

1. In chapter 4 Farris discusses the large topic of children’s literature. It is important to expose children to literature and have multiple opportunities for them to interact with it as well. Reading out loud helps the child with their building of knowledge also helps build skills for them to read on their own. There are different genres of children’s literature that Farris covers thoroughly in this chapter. Traditional literatures are the folk tales and stories that are handed down from generation to
generation. Modern fantasy is the creation of a time and place that is unbelievable that is told to be believable. A good example of modern fantasy is Harry Potter. Contemporary Realistic Fiction is where an author imagines and writes about characters, setting and a plot that are all believable. Historical fiction is where the characters, setting plot, and theme are all realistic and usually historically based. Biographies and autobiographies are pieces of literature that are written about a person’s life whether they are written by someone else or by the actual person. Informational books include factual materials that are accurate. Finally, poetry is literature that rhymes or includes personal deep thought and meaning. Next, Farris discusses multicultural literature and provides a long listing of resources categorized by different cultures. Literature circles are that last topic that Farris discusses in chapter four. Literature circles benefit students in so many ways; help students converse, help share personal perspectives, promote student acceptance, and literature circles also help develop reading strategies and proficiency in responding to a piece of text.

2. “Teachers must introduce students to a variety of quality literature and then offer ample opportunities for them to engage in free reading for enjoyment and enrichment” (pg. 120). I think this quote sums up the entire chapter four of Farris. I think that it is so true and I hope that, as a teacher, I am able to offer and provide valid education to my students that will help form them as an individual in their future.

3. I liked how Farris includes the section on bilingual readers. On page 167, she brings in a great method on how to begin reading with bilingual students. I know around here the Hazelton Area school district is not hiring any teachers or educators that don’t have a background in Spanish or another language. This is a great thing to have when going into a school where there will be bilingual students in your classroom.

4. I really liked how Dr. Walker brought in examples of the classroom journals from his prior classrooms. It was interesting to see the differentiation between student’s age level, grade level, and what they had to say and their writing abilities.

5. Today in class we used a graphic organizer that I had never seen before. The passage we used it with was definitely about my reading level and it was hard to understand and know what to write in my organizer. I think the purpose of the article was to make us feel like students would feel when trying to read a piece of literature and not being able to comprehend it. It definitely worked and the graphic organizer will be a great teaching tool in the future.

Comments

1. Very nicely done, detailed summary. I like how you used Harry Potter as an example for modern fantasy being that is on the midterm!!

2. I agree, not only should teachers assign literature accordingly, but they should also allow free-time for reading.

3. I also agree. Nowadays with the multicultural classrooms, teachers should be very prepared for anything

4. I also wrote about the journals in my blog. It was nice to see an actual child's work and see what they were writing about. It was also interesting to see the different handwritings depending on their age.
5. Again, I wrote about the graphic organizer as well. I feel it will definitely benefit students having a difficult time understanding the reading and will help answer any questions they may have.

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 9:51 PM by Samantha

1. You summary is accurate and includes super examples of the various genres. I agree with Samantha, I like how you included an element that is on the mid-term.

2. I agree with the quote and your analysis, we must provide the students with quality literature for them to read and for us to read aloud to them.

3. ELLs will be grateful that you tab and use this section for their benefit.

4. As we all our educators, I think it is important that we see authentic student work and grapple with reading, analyzing and discussing it. I am happy that so many enjoyed my sharing.

Thursday, 06/05/2008 10:59 AM by DAVID

5. Sorry, I forgot to add commentary about #5, graphic organizers should assist students in their understandings. Here I provided difficult-to-comprehend reading so you could feel the anxiety students feel and try to work through the hard-to-understand reading by using a graphic organizer based upon reciprocal reading.

Thursday, 06/05/2008 11:02 AM by DAVID

Christine (permalink)
Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 6:58 PM by Christine

1. Chapter four of Farris is filled with information about children’s literature. Literary elements are a part of every book. The five literary elements are: characterization, plot, setting, theme, and author’s style. Characterization is important because children can relate to them and learn about real world experiences from characters in books. The plot is the story part of the book. The plot should have a good beginning in order to keep a child’s interest. Setting is the time and place of the book. Knowing when and where a story takes place can change the reader’s thoughts about the characters or story. A theme is the point in a book where the author wants to convey a meaning to the reader. Style refers to the author’s word choice and sentence construction. An author may like to use repetition, rhyme, or humor for their writing style. There are many different genres that are associated with children’s literature. Seven different genres are described in this chapter: traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography and autobiography, informational books, and poetry. Traditional literature includes folktales and allows children to tell the difference between good and evil. The unbelievable becomes believable and outrageous events occur in modern fantasy, such as in the Harry Potter series. Characters who are in fictitious settings that could be a part of real life are those who are part of contemporary realistic fiction. Historical fiction must consist of characters, settings, and plots that are realistic from the time period of when the story occurs. Biographies and autobiographies are both nonfiction works. A biography is written about someone else other than the author while autobiographies are one’s own writing about his or her life. Reference books and how-to books are part of the informational genre. The last genre discussed in the chapter is poetry. Children love poetry because of the rhyme and rhythm associated with it. Thematic units are a way for children to be able to focus much attention on one topic. Many different genres of books can be used while doing a thematic unit. Literature circles are a hands-on approach that promotes reading and discussion. Students are placed in groups to read the same story and then discuss their feelings and reactions to the book. This is beneficial to students so they can see how their classmates consider different aspects of the book.

2. “Any avid reader feels the urge to share a good book with somebody immediately after finishing it.” (pg 121) This quote reminded me of so many people I know. My co-workers are always reading good books and suggesting them to me. I usually have to turn down their books simply because I don’t have time to read anything other than school books while I am taking classes. I look forward to getting time to catch up on a few books that I have wanted to read.
3. I think this chapter provided a lot of great references. There are lists of suggested books for emergent and beginning readers, multicultural literature, and thematic units. These are great pages to refer back to as a new teacher.

4. I was glad we were introduced to the Ruth Heller books today. I have never heard of her or the books before today. I am definitely interested in getting the books for my own collection.

5. I felt that is was beneficial to take time at the end of class to discuss our upcoming assignment. I know I was unsure of what we had to. After discussing it, I feel that I know what to do and can begin the assignment.

Comments

1. Tab this chapter literature. Now you have a reference to check as you build your classroom library. As usual, a most complete summary of the chapter.

2. I try to keep a children's book on my table at home. I have recently finished the Among the Hidden series of seven books. I am currently reading the second book in the Ender's Game series. All Sci-fi at the moment but I do vary my genres to keep abreast for my students.

3. I agree with your comment about this text being a superb reference for all educators.

4. Thank you for stating that you were exposed to new materials by the lessons relating to the Heller texts.

5. I will continue this conversation in today's class, too. It is important to be sure that your students know what they need to accomplish in all of your assignments. Take all of the time that is needed to clarify and answer questions and concerns.

Thursday, 06/05/2008 10:36 AM by David

1. Your summary was well worded and complete.

2. I think after reading a great book you are driven to share it with others.

3. I think this book, especially this chapter, would be a great source for new teachers trying to figure out what books should be in their classroom.

4. I love the colorful pictures in these books and would definitely want them as a part of my classroom library!

5. It is always nice to feel comfortable going into an assignment.

Monday, 06/09/2008 5:15 PM by Zoe

Lisa (permalink)
Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 5:23 PM by Lisa
1. This chapter is about children’s literature. There are five important literacy elements that students should learn: characterization, plot, setting, theme, author’s style, and illustrations. The chapter then goes on to talk about the different styles of writing. Children’s book can be traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical, biography and autobiography, informational, and poetry. Traditional literature are stories that were once oral stories that are now written. They usually include folktales, humorous tales, beast tales, and magic tales. Modern fantasy usually takes place in the present or future and is when something that is unbelievable becomes believable. In contemporary realistic fiction, the story is about something that could actually come true. These are stories that students can relate to. The chapter then goes on to talk about multicultural literature. This is a way to help children understand different cultures. Thematic units are a way to integrate curriculum. This is a helpful way to show the students how one topic can be related to other subjects. Literature circles are being used more often in classes. Students are put into small groups and read the same story. They then talk about it and do activities in their groups.

2. “Quality literature should be not only read aloud but also read by students themselves.” (121) I think that this is a true statement. Some students will understand the book better if the teacher reads it to them and others have to read it themselves. By doing both you are reaching all of your students.

3. I like how this chapter gives a list of suggested books for each type of reading. This is very useful. It will help when trying to cover a topic and as a new teacher will not know which books will be useful.

4. It was interesting in class how we took that test to find out what type of learners we are. For me it seemed to be pretty accurate. This is something that can be used in a classroom so you know how to reach your students.

5. I really enjoyed the book Dr. Walker finished reading to us today. I like how it introduced life and death to children in a non-threatening way. It will be useful to have in the classroom when a student has a death in their family.

Comments

1. There was a lot covered in this chapter and I think you did a great job picking out main ideas and topics that will help you in discovering your own teaching practice.

2. I highlighted this quote as well. I agree with you and I think it ties into Gardner's multiple intelligences as well.

3. I agree- I appreciate Farris' effort in including all these resources for us. This is definitely a book to keep and not sell back!

4. I thought it was accurate as well- I think students would really be interested in what type of learner they are.

5. I think that that book is a book for preparation and a nice resource to have when the topic does arise in the classroom.

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 6:54 PM by Kylie
1. Your summary is most complete as you cover the salient ideas of literary elements, genres, and lit. groups.

2. Yes, let's reach all of our students with great literature. Masterful teachers assure that the room is filled with superb book and read aloud books of various genres and challenge the students.

3. I agree with you and Kylie, this chapter has superior resources of book lists. Use these lists to build a fabulous library.

4. I am pleased that you felt that the Learning Styles Inv. was a worthwhile endeavor. Use it in your teaching practice, too.

5. We must teach to the whole child, here I modeled reach out to the affective domain rather than just tending to the cognitive side of children.

post on June 4 2008 (permalink)

1. You covered all of the material very well, it seems like you have a good understanding of what the chapter was about.

2. I agree, I comprehend more if someone reads it to me, but to become a better reader, I should work on reading to myself.

3. I also like the list, it broadens our knowledge on different books that can aide in certain topics.

4. I also taught this was helpful and accurate.

5. I agree, this book would be good for children when dealing with life and death, it makes a complicated topic more easily understood.

Post on June 4 2008 (permalink)

1.) Children’s literature is an important part of language arts and language arts curriculum should revolve around it. Quality literature helps children learn to not only enjoy reading, but also appreciate it. These two elements are key elements that students need in order to become lifelong readers. Teachers need to understand the literacy elements such as characterization, plot, setting, them, and author's style. Understanding these elements help children discover that literature is composed of different components and appreciate reading. Teachers need to expose children to different forms of literary genres to expand their students knowledge base and experience to literature. Thematic units help children gain knowledge to specific topics and areas. Children's literature often helps children become eager and motivates them to read books in different content areas. Also, literature circles help promote reading, discussion, and cooperation. Literature response journals help students to form meaning to the books they are reading and relate that meaning to their previous knowledge and experiences. Students also should be encouraged to make prediction about where the plot to books will go and reflect on what they have read.
help students with their analyzing and evaluation skills.

2.) “If you don’t have time to read every word, skim though it or go to the “Booktalks” Web site of previously prepared booktalks created by classroom teachers” (pg 178). I never knew that this website was available for teachers. It is such a good resource to have at our fingertips because teachers don’t always have time to read everything before it is introduced to the class, especially during student teaching or during our first couple years of teaching.

3.) I love children’s literature. It not only captivates students, but can be a great spring board for lessons. I remember my favorite part of elementary school was story time. Most of the time, teachers did integrate these books into their curriculum and I learned more from the books then I did from the textbooks because it added meaning to the content.

4.) I enjoyed the Ruth Kelly books. I think that even though some of the pictures or text maybe a little questionable, the content is presented in a fun way to help students better understand grammar. I think they would be a great teaching tool!

5.) I wish we would have spent less time going over what each Ruth Kelly book was about and more time going over the assignment for Monday. I feel like many of us were confused and even though we went over the assignment, I think many of us still need some clarification.

Comments

1. You did a good job of taking a very long chapter and finding the important facts. You picked out what you felt is useful and I agree with your summary.

2. I did not know about it either. I agree that it will be useful. We have so much other stuff to cover, we can’t read everything.

3. A good children’s book can make reading fun for the rest of the student’s life.

4. I have never seen these before, but I enjoyed them as well. This is something I would use in the classroom.

5. I do feel a little uneasy about this assignment. I am still a little confused about what we are supposed to do.

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 6:00 PM by Lisa

1. I agree with Lisa, your summary of a long chapter is concise and to the point. I agree that the two elements related to growing life-long readers is to have the students understand the literary elements and to become well-read in all of the genres.

2. Web sites are superb resources. Please use the plethora of sites that I have posted on my fac/staff Web site.
3. I agree with both of you, good books last a lifetime. Most people don't remember the textbooks that were assigned.

4. Ruth Heller is a wonderful resource that students are fascinated by. She captivates learners with her unusual illustrations and incorporates very advanced language arts concepts.

5. I am aware of this confusion and will assist in alleviating it today after the mid-term. Hang in there, I am not expecting anything that you all are incapable of delivering.

larissa (permalink)
Created on Wednesday, 06/04/2008 11:29 AM by Larissa

1. Chapter 4 focused on children's literature and importance in the classroom as well as how to choose quality literature as a teacher. First there are five literary elements with which teachers should be familiar; these elements are 1) characterization, 2) plot, 3) setting, 4) theme, 5) style, and 6) illustrations. Characterization is the description or picture provided of the characters in a story, it is best if characters are made to be believable with both good and bad traits. The plot is the action of the story and in children's literature should follow a chronological order consisting of action, conflict, intrigue, and resolution. There are four different types of plots that an author may use in his or her writing- person vs. person, person vs. nature, person vs. self, and person vs. society. The setting refers to both the time and place of a story and should evoke multisensory experiences. The theme of a story is the central idea of the writing nad the point or meaning the author is trying to convey to the reader. Style is the word choice within the text and varies depending on the type of genre. Illustrations are specifically crucial for informational and picture books and should extend the story or concept being presented. Farris next delves into the various genres that make up children's literature and they are 1) picture books, 2) traditional literature, 3) modern fantasy, 4) contemporary realistic fiction, 5) historical fiction, 6) biography and autobiography, 7) informational, and 8) poetry. Picture books are stories in which the pictures are central to the story and in wordless picture books tell the story without any accompanying text, Farris emphasizes that picture books can be analyzed and read by students of all grade levels. Traditional literature began with oral stories being passed down through generations and religion and heroes are common themes; within this genre there are fables, folktales, myths and legends. Modern fantasy relies on the creation of a place or time and may take place in the past, present or future to make unbelievable things become believable to the reader. Contemporary realistic fiction consists of characters, plots and settings that are believable to the reader and could take place in real life or be true, these works often deal with actual problems a child may face. Historical fiction is fictitious in story but the setting and plot are realistic and accurate for the time period in which the work is set. Biography is a story written about the life of a person, and autobiography is written about a person by that person and in both works the subject of the writing should be portrayed accurately. Informational books is factual material and in order to engage students needs to be accurate and the writing style needs to be interesting and clear. Finally poetry as a genre is popular among children because they naturalyl relate to the playful writing; feelings and reflections about life are popular themes. When selecting multicultural literature for the classroom it is important to promote all cultures and to choose stories which avoid stereotypes, portray cultural groups authentically, uses language reflective of that culture, validates the child, broadens the reader's vision, and invites reflection by the child. Farris then provides in the chapter a complete listing of quality multicultural literature as well as thematic units centered around children's literature. Literaturer circles are defined and explained as a popular way for groups of students who have read the same book to discuss their feelings and findings about what they have read. A listing of a variety of benefits of literature circles are outlines as well as the steps to implementing a literaturer circle in your classroom which moves from a read aloud of the section assigned to assigning individual roles to group members to compete as they read the next assigned section. Besides literature circles other ways of inviting students to read quality children's literature are by using literature response journals where the child records their feelings about what they have read and the teacher comments on their writing. Also book talks are identified as ways teachers can promote literature to their class, for books or stories that may not be as popular with students Farris provides helpful tips for teachers to help them promote literature through book talks.
2. "Teachers must introduce students to a variety of quality literature and then offer ample opportunities for them to engage in free reading for enjoyment and enrichment" (p. 120). I chose this quote because I think it perfectly summarizes children's literature and its importance in the classroom as a way to invite and enhance student's literacy skills and engagement. Without the teacher providing quality literature in their classroom and promoting ways of being involved with the reading, some students may not receive this exposure to reading anywhere else in life.

3. The thematic unit list and the multicultural book list was my favorite part of this chapter. Such great literature is identified and provided for after this class that we could actually take into the classroom as student teachers and teachers ourselves to use in our lessons. It is very important to me to provide a well-rounded and high quality literature experience for my students and this list will be very helpful.

4. I liked how thorough the section was on literature circles; I loved doing this when I was in school. The opportunity to talk to other people about what you are reading extends the meaning of the text for the reader and opens their eyes to other people's opinions, thoughts and ideas that may bring new insight to the text.

5. I finished reading *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* last night and I found it to be very insightful and yet not overpowering in its message. A story I would promote to any age reader who is dealing with loss, the story would have given me solace as a child when I lost my first family member as I was too scared to talk to anyone about the confusing feelings children often face when this first arises in their life.

Comments

1.) Nice summary, covered all the main points in the chapter.

2.) I agree. Also, literature can be a great springboard into other subject matters and lessons.

3.) This list will be very helpful in the future.

4.) Literature circles are great way for students to better understand what they read.

5.) I loved this book as well. I thought it was a great tool for children, teachers, and families, when dealing with death.

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 4:44 PM by Jennifer

1. I agree with Jennifer, your summary is quite complete and most satisfying to read. I like how you list the various genres and then go into detail about each one. You also include the wonderful ideas of book chats and literature circles that help students delve into the lives and messages of books.

2. Yes, as teachers we must be discerning as to what we select for our students to read and what will be read aloud. There are so many fantastic titles out there. However, the world is also filled with lots of &*(%#^ books.

3. Thematic units can be so exciting as the learning lasts a long time and student are encouraged to delve deeply into their areas of interest and can also learn to develop their research skills at early ages.
4. Students love participating in Lit. Circles and they are such a real-world aspect to reading. They are far superior to use than archaic book reports.

5. The whole purpose of this magnificent read aloud was to demonstrate the affective domain being tended to by the teacher. All too often we instruct solely to the cognitive domain and never assist students to develop their emotions, address their fears, and evolve their humanity.

Stephanie (permalink)
Created on Tuesday, 06/03/2008 8:35 PM by Stephanie

1. Chapter 4 introduces the topic of children's literature. The introduction touches upon the idea that each child should have experience with a variety of quality literature. Some important literary elements a teacher must be familiar with are: characterization; plot; setting, both time and place; theme; author's style; and for picture books and some informational books, illustrations. The chapter then goes into greater depth to explain each of the literary elements just mentioned. Picture books are the next concept in the chapter, explaining what they are and saying that they can be good in every grade level. After talking about the picture books, the text moves onto the different genres. Some of the different genres are: traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, informational works, and poetry. With the diversity increasing in the classroom, the text introduces multicultural literature and how to select different books for in the classroom. When selecting books, some criteria to follow is: avoid stereotypes, portray the cultural groups and their values authentically, use language that reflects standards set by local usage, validate children's experience, broaden our vision, and invite reflection. The text gives a variety of example books that you could use for multicultural literature, and also gives examples of books to incorporate into thematic units. The chapter then goes into talking about integration of the curriculum, and shows ways to do this through many examples. Lastly, that chapter talks about literature circles and conversations with beginning readers, beginning bilingual readers, and intermediate and middle school readers. It talks about how to organize a literature circle, and the text suggests giving students different roles in the literature circles. Be sure to have a set process for the literature circle so the children know what to expect each time. The next part of the chapter discusses the use of literature response journals; which enables a child to write down his or her own feelings, thoughts, predictions, hunches, and reactions while reading a piece of literature. The final topic covered is book talks, and how to go about conducting them in the classroom.

2. "Teachers must introduce students to a variety of quality literature, and then offer ample opportunities for them to engage in free reading for enjoyment and enrichment" (Pg. 120). This statement reinforces what Dr. Walker was talking about the other day in class, and how children need to experience a variety of genres. However, as a teacher, you must keep in mind that not every child will like certain types of literature. So to keep reading fun and joyful, you also need to allow time for free reading, where they can read the genres that they like the most. As a teacher you are guiding them to build their own preferences.

3. I liked doing something totally different today in class by going down to the computer lab. Since I have already taken learning style tests in the past, I felt that this assignment was going to be boring. I understand that learning styles do change sometimes, but in my case all of the tests I have taken all showed that auditory is my lowest with kinesthetic and visual are on the top of my list.

4. I am excited to start the writing assignment dealing with the pictures. It would be nice to hear what some people come up with, by reading them aloud in class. I feel this might cause me to become more creative with my writing.

5. Monday's class we reviewed for the midterm exam. I like how Dr. Walker goes through all the questions with us and confirms the answers for each question. I was surprised that I got them all right except for like one or two questions. I feel I am well prepared for the exam, and wish it was sooner than Thursday, so I could get it done and over with.

Comments
1. Your summary was very in depth and well organized! I really like the examples you gave for things to keep in mind while selecting books that are sensitive to things like stereotypes and cultures! I like the use of literature response journals too.

2. I agree that while you should have required readings that free read happens as well. Have a variety available, and let them choose sometimes.

3. I agree that going into a different setting was interesting. I was surprised by my results of the test taken. I feel that auditory is not necessarily my strongest point, I’m not that good of a listener, ha, even though I do try!

4. Yes! I mentioned wanting to do this activity in a previous blog and am equally excited to hear creative minds through the stories about the interesting pictures.

5. The review was wonderful and I feel very prepared for it too. Thanks for going over it with us Dr. Walker!

Zoe (permalink)
Created on Tuesday, 06/03/2008 1:04 PM by Zoe

1. Your summary is masterful and very complete. I love how you have it organized to highlight the literary elements and the various genres of literature. Both important factors in the development of writing skills, too.

2. I love your words, "we must guide them to build their own preferences." Yes, expose them to all of the various genres and allow them to discern the ones they prefer.

3. I am pleased that you felt that the Learning Styles Inventory was a worthy activity. I hope that you will utilize this in your teaching, too.

4. I like your idea of verbalizing thoughts prior to actually writing to the visuals.

5. You’re welcome for the review. Remember to use ideas like this to lessen test anxiety in your students, too.

Zoe

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 11:28 AM by Julie

Thursday, 06/05/2008 9:53 AM by DAVID

1. Chapter 4 in Farris called "Childrens Literature - Opening Windows to New Worlds." This chapter begins with a wonderful introduction that stresses the importance of literature, and the role that teachers and parents play in literature development. The chapter is not just about getting children to read books, it is about what kind of literature should be exposed to children, the different components of literature, and the idea that it should not just be read and forgotten, but should be discussed, reflected upon, responded to, and shared with others. The important literary elements that are discussed in the chapter are characterization, plot, setting, theme, style, and illustrations. Although most books contain all of these elements, one may be stressed more than others in a particular work. It is important that teachers understand these elements in order to effectively teach them, and to choose appropriate literature for students. Genre is another important categorization of children's literature. Genres include traditional, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, informational, and poetry. The chapter also covered multicultural literature, literature circles, thematic units, and...
book talks, along with giving several examples of each of these.

2. "the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills eventually required for reading appears to be reading aloud to children" (pg.120).

I love this quote because I think that reading to children is one of the best and most important things you can do for them. I have worked at a summer camp for 5 years, and I have found that no matter what the age of my campers, reading to them before bed always calms them down and is always an enjoyable experience for everyone. I have had cabins with 7 year olds, and cabins with 14 year olds, and they all enjoyed being read to.

3. In reading this chapter, I was brought back to my experience in elementary school when I had to write out the setting, characters, plot, etc. for book reports. I don't think it is a great idea to have children only write out these parts of the story, but doing an outline or story web that contains a section for each of these categories is a good way to give children real examples from books they have read when they are learning the literary elements.

4. This doesn't really have anything to do with the chapter, but reading about children's literature made me think of something I did in 1st grade that I will definitely do with my students if I have the chance. Every year the 1st grade teacher cut out several circles from different colored construction paper. Each time a child finished a book they wrote the name and author on one of the circles, and the teacher created a "reading book worm" that went around the top of the room. Because when we were in kindergarten we loved to see the book worm, we were determined to beat the class that had previously been in 1st grade. We were motivated to read, and we ended up making our bookworm go out the door and into the next room.

5. I loved all the examples in this chapter! This is a book that I will definitely use after class. I find this to be one of the most useful textbooks I have ever used, because I can see myself opening up to this chapter when I am teaching for ideas about books and units for my class.

Comments

1. summary of the main points in the chapter, I would include more details maybe define the concepts that Farris went over in the chapter but overall a concise picture of what the chapter is about.

2. Good quote, good concept. Reading aloud is something so simple to do but it can enhance a child's appreciation and love of reading so much more. Thats great that you include it at your work and are exposing your camp goers to hearing literature read aloud. I still read aloud to my family when I'm home, we choose a different book each summer and take turns reading aloud- I still love it.

3. I agree, book reports can become tedious and for some reason teachers focus on them in school, atleast they did when we were there. Now there are so many more fun and creative projects that get kids involved with learning this literary elements without the drone.

4. Oh my gosh I'm so glad you wrote about this! what a cute way to brighten up the room and promote literature you know children like and plus it documents that your students are reading. awesome idea thanks for sharing!

5. I wrote about the examples as well, this chapter especially with the book lists and the thematic unit examples provided not only ideas for lessons but ideas for books to collect for the classroom.

Wednesday, 06/04/2008 3:48 PM by Larissa
genres.

2. I love your schema connections to your summer camp experiences of reading aloud and actually witnessing the childrens' delight in listening to various stories.

3. Book reports are archaic and you most definitely want to use webs for students to realize the important elements of story development. This helps both with reading and writing skill development.

4. I agree with you and Larissa, let's have the book worm recognition of readers and the books they have read fill our room and hallways and lives.

5. I am so pleased to see both of you recongize the worth of this text that will go far beyond this class.

1. Great summary. I really liked this chapter, however, there was something that I really didn't like. I didn't like all of the examples of the books given. A few are fine, but there were examples throughout the reading and then there were examples that took up a few pages. Too much!! I could have done without that.

2. I think I may have chosen the same quote. I agree with this. It is very important to instill in parents that reading isn't just done because. We should read to our students to help in their development and knowledge. I personally don't like to read, but when I read something that I am interested in, I gain so much. READ READ READ

3. I agree. I think he students put to much focuse on finding what they need rather than actually reading the story and filling in the blanks.

4. Great idea! I'll have to keep that in mind. Very motivational!

5. Yes, this book will be added to my library for sure. Lots of great information. Lots of examples, and lots of things we can use once we become teachers.