



Through the Fire

Eighth Grade Unit On Adversity

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ELAN 4400

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December 9, 2002

Eighth Grade Literature Unit

Through the Fire-Encountering Adversity in Adolescence

Rationale (2-part)

Part One-Why teach Out of the Dust?

Adversity inevitably finds each human heart somewhere on life's journey. Blind to race, gender, or ethnic identities, adversity often brings people young and old to their knees in desperation and disappointment. Chances are that students enter our school doors carrying more than the backpacks on their shoulders; the majority of young adults strain under the weight and pressure of the adverse conditions in their lives. Teachers have not the capacity to eliminate adversity, but can equip students to handle it wisely and use it to their advantage. Examining adversity in literature can illuminate the process of going "through the fire," and bring about an understanding of how different individuals experience and react to difficult circumstances. Exploring adversity in various texts will also bridge the gap between students of different races, genders, and cultures by providing a topic with which all peoples can identify.

Karen Hesse's young adult novel, Out of the Dust, speaks to its readers through free-verse poetry. The form of this novel allows students to familiarize themselves with the flow and beauty of poetry without requiring that they understand specific meters and rhythms. Students will be asked to create their own free-verse poetry, using Hesse's varied text as a model. The novel is told through the eyes of a young girl who inhabits the desolation of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl during the 1930's. Billy-Jo (the main character) seems to use her writing as a tool to handle the difficulties in her life; she herself models the habit of life-long writing, experiencing release and relief as she expresses herself through language. Middle School students will benefit tremendously by learning that the objective of writing is not the perfection of the final copy. Writing is a process, and it is the process itself and its accompanying benefits that students should understand and

experience. Creating unique free-verse poetry using Hesse's text as inspiration will help students understand the validity of their own struggles, and help them establish a positive, non-violent way to cope with difficulty.

Directly addressing problems unique to adolescents, this text will prove relevant and refreshing to young adults, who often feel misunderstood and isolated in their struggles. Billy-Jo weathers a plethora of varied difficulties: the loss of her mother, self-consciousness about appearance, financial instability, feeling unloved by her father, and troublesome environmental conditions. Students are likely to identify with Billy-Jo in at least one of her struggles, and learn from the various ways she reacts to them. One of the benefits of reading literature is that it enables us to see possible outcomes to action and attitude. Billy-Jo demonstrates three major methods of coping with adversity: escape, survival, and victory. She settles finally upon the third approach, but only after experiencing the defeat of the first two.

In recent years, American public schools have seen young people commit suicide as a means of escape from their problems. Just last year, a Gwinett County High school student ended his life during the school year. While Billy-Jo does not attempt to kill herself, she does attempt to escape her situation, only to discover the futility of fleeing from problems. This example will prompt young adults to consider perseverance instead of surrender. Adolescents also make the mistake of settling for survival. Instead of becoming active participants in their situations, they satisfy themselves with merely enduring difficulty. Billy-Jo shows readers the difference between survival and victory, primarily by the way she reacts to her physical handicap. After being burned in a tragic accident, Billy-Jo loses her passion for piano. She initially settles for surviving the fiery

incident, and fails to take an active role in overcoming the difficulties she faces. In the end, she decides to press on despite physical disadvantages. This example will help students to understand those around them that do have physical disadvantages, and will show them how to be encouragers and motivators.

Billy-Joe's experiences how adversity can unify communities and families. The novel demonstrates how countries and geographic areas can encounter adversity collectively through economic or environmental hardship. The novel is set during the depression, a defining historical period in United States history. Current economic prosperity prevents most middle-class students from understanding the effects of economic hardship; connecting with Billy-Jo across the expanse of more than seventy years, students will hopefully reach new understandings of this particular type of adversity. Understanding Billy-Jo might enable upper and middle-class students to appreciate the struggle of the lower-class students that surround them.

Hesse's novel also addresses crucial family issues. Divorce is commonly seen in today's society; consequently, many students live with one parent. Though Billy-Jo loses her mother and baby brother in a fire accident, she still battles some of the same problems that today's adolescents battle in single parent homes. Billy-Jo learns how to find common ground with her father through adversity, and learns how to understand and appreciate him. The novel displays how even parents experience times of weakness and sadness, and teaches children not to expect perfection. These family topics will hopefully help students to negotiate the difficulties in their own homes.

Part Two-Why Multigenre?



Theory Work-Rationale for Using Multigenre Writing in classroom

During my ten-week student teaching practicum, I will be reading “The Diary of Anne Frank” and Out of the Dust with my eighth grade students. Instead of giving a comprehensive exam, or assigning a traditional research paper, I will be involving them in a multigenre project that will serve as the culminating piece for our unit on adversity. Why this multigenre project? It is my belief that a multigenre project will foster my students’ creativity, improve their reading and writing skills, and encourage them to take ownership of the learning process in my classroom.

Elizabeth A. Fischer, author of the English Journal article “Prescriptions for Curing English Teacher Split Personality Disorder,” tells of some problems she experienced during her early years as a teacher: “the first cause of my problem was that I viewed reading literature and writing papers as essentially different” (40). Fischer began teaching literature with the idea that students should develop the ability to “properly read” literary texts. Her students produced voiceless essays and purchased Cliff Notes to help them attain the “proper” reading they thought she desired. Fischer taught writing in a

different manner, understanding that writing was a process of construction, meaning making. It was only when Fischer began integrating the processes of reading and writing that her classroom began to come alive. She began to see that the meaning of a text “lies in the transaction between the reader and the text, not in the text itself” (41).

In an effort to apply this reader response approach to my teaching and place an emphasis on students’ responses to texts, I aim to use writing that will engage students with the literature, allow them to raise questions, and force them to use research and writing as a way to become better readers. So often, students are expected to simply regurgitate facts in writing and research assignment. In a multigenre project, this type of regurgitation becomes impossible. Multigenre projects instead allow students to write creatively and construct new texts with the information and ideas they encounter in literature and research.

The multigenre paper invites students to, as Dennis Sumara says, “build a bridge between a moment in the text and their experience with it.” Sirpa T. Grierson quotes Sumara in her EJ article entitled “Circling Through Text: Teaching Research Through Multigenre Writing.” Grierson, an English teacher in Utah tells about her experiences with multigenre projects. In an effort to prompt student thinking about the project, she invited a colleague to speak about it to her class. She quotes her colleague, who spoke on using Catcher in the Rye as a platform for multigenre: “The writer must have something that he or she wants to do or say...For instance, if I am writing about a person, I have to think about what he or she would be like. I have tried to get into Holden’s head...” (53). This quote shows some of the benefits of multigenre writing. First of all, it requires that students have something original to say. Students cannot merely provide a summary of

their reading or research. They must go deeper into the hidden meaning of the text, and their unique experience with it. This quote also demonstrates how multigenre writing will improve student reading practices. Students must put themselves in the character's shoes and really think about what the character might think or say. One of my goals as a student teacher is to refine my students' reading practices. Using this multigenre project will help me do just that.

The multigenre project will also allow students to take ownership of the learning process. They will be given CHOICE! Students will choose which genres to use in their project, and will choose the perspective from which they will be writing. They will also select connectors for their texts and decide the order of their pieces. Students will also conduct research that will be meaningful to them; this research will directly benefit their multigenre project. While I understand that gaining knowledge through research is important, I believe that research can also enable students to produce something. This multigenre project will make research relevant for the students.

Grierson provides many examples of success in her years of using multigenre assignments. Though she was first skeptical of the claim, she now writes: "for me, multigenre writing has become a powerful complement to the traditional research paper, allowing my students to develop the discipline or organizing their thoughts" (51). Her students appreciate the difficulty saying: "Multigenre is a bit more dangerous. For me, it required investing myself more" (52). Another student wrote: "this has been the most creative and enjoyable project I have ever done" (55). Hopefully, my students will have similar things to say at the end of our project time.

Works Cited

Grierson, Sirpa T. "Circling Through Text: Teaching Research Through Multigenre Writing." English Journal. September 1999.

Fischer, Elizabeth A. "Prescriptions for Curing English Teacher Split Personality Disorder." English Journal. March 2000.

Unit Goals and Rubrics

In-Process Texts and Activities

1. Reading Log/Project Log

I would like for my students to view writing as something other than a performance. I want them to use writing as a tool for thinking, developing ideas, and experimenting. Asking students to write in a reading log will help them use writing as strategy to improve their reading practices. I will not grade this reading log for correct grammar or punctuation, but will instead look at the progress that they make through their log. During the reading of Out of the Dust, students will record memorable quotes and respond to them. Students will also formulate questions in their log, make notes of language, metaphor, etc. During the multigenre project, students will use writing to generate ideas about their topic and track their progress. Students will be asked to respond to the text using the categories of: comprehension, reflection, and connection.

2. Student-Generated Discussions

This goal relates to those of the reading logs. Not only will students see the reading logs as a learning tool, but they will see the discussions as a learning tool also. Some students learn best through writing; other students learn best through talking. The discussions will not be looked at as a performance. I will emphasize the importance of student-generated questions, and will give students ownership of their learning experience. Students will begin to see themselves as participating agents in the learning process. Students will develop meaningful questions inspired by their own interests, and will share these questions in small groups and whole-class discussion.

Culminating Texts and Activities

3. Personal Narrative Related to Adversity

The Reading Log helps students connect to the literature in an informal way. The Personal Narrative will help students relate to the literature in a more formal way. Eighth grade students in my school are graded by the writing rubric. The personal narrative could be a piece that I could assess using this rubric. My introductory activity links to this goal by asking students to make a life map and write about situations of adversity in their life. Students can return to this writing from the introductory activity and revise it to create a polished piece of writing.

4. Literary Analysis

Class discussions will touch on the use of figurative language and diction in the poetry. Students will be asked to respond to one poem from Karen Hesse's novel and discuss the language and use of metaphor and simile in the piece. Students will be asked to discuss how the adversity discussed in the poem affects the life of the character. Eighth grade students are not yet ready for full essays, but can construct solid paragraphs.

5. Multigenre Project

Students will construct a multigenre project incorporating at least two genres of literature and web research that we will do in class. Students will ideally include their personal narrative in the multigenre project. Students may take on the persona of a character in the novel, or may write about adversity from their own perspective. Projects will be presented during the final week of the unit.

Reading Logs

A-Displays the correct format: quotes on the left, and comments on the right.

Contains regular, dated entries
Contains the student-generated questions that were assigned.
Displays comprehension, reflection, and connection comments
Shows evidence of reading the full text.

B. Displays correct format.

Contains dated entries
Displays most student generated questions.
Displays comprehension and reflection comments
Shows evidence of reading text

C. Mostly correct format

Shows evidence of some reading.
Contains dated entries.

D. Contains entries

Shows evidence of some reading

F. Contains entries

MultigenreProject

- A. Contains all elements: Prologue, Table of Contents, Connectors, and Two Genres
Evidence that the skills learned about Literary Analysis, metaphors/similes/ and historical information from Web Research has been incorporated into the student writing.
One piece has been revised twice in writing workshop
One piece is the personal narrative, and is at least two pages long.
Presented neatly and clearly.
- B. Contains most elements, evidence that some skills have been applied.
One piece has been revised in writing workshop
One piece is personal narrative, and is at least two pages.
- C. Contains most elements, evidence that skills have been applied. Minimal revision work.
- D. Contains a few elements. Minimal revision work.
- F. Contains one or two elements.

Personal Narrative Related to Adversity

- A. Is correct length. Has been revised twice during writing workshops. Shows evidence of deep consideration of personal adversity. Takes the reader through the example and explains consequences. Follows rules of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Paragraphs are organized properly.
- B. Is correct length. Has been revised during writing workshops. Shows evidence of consideration of adversity. Follows rules of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Paragraphs are reasonably organized.
- C. Has been revised during writing workshops. Relates to adversity. Follows some rules of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.
- D. Relates to personal adversity.
- F. Contains some evidence of personal adversity.

Literary Analysis

- A. Displays knowledge of the novel and can identify characters in poem.
Displays good understanding of historical information, metaphor, and adversity.
Students displays evidence of learning from class discussions and activities.
- B. Displays knowledge of novel.
Displays some understanding of historical information, metaphor, and adversity.
Student has learned from class discussions/activities.
- C. Displays knowledge of novel. Displays minimal knowledge of three areas.
- D. Displays knowledge of novel.
- F. Answers do not display knowledge of novel, but involve some sort of interpretation.

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Eighth Grade Unit on Adversity

DAY 1

3 min. Taking attendance, housekeeping, etc.

10-15 min. I will re-introduce myself as a student-teacher, after having been gone from the classroom for several weeks. I will use this time to review names with a simple game. Each student will say his name using this format:

My name is Sarah and I would like to go to Savannah in a Shuttle bus.

My name is Casey and I would like to go to Colorado in a cattle truck.

This should relax the students and allow them to feel at ease and comfortable in the classroom. This game will also assist me in learning their names.

10 min. I will then introduce the writing assignment. (Students will have been notified ahead of time to purchase a lab notebook that will serve as a journal. This journal will be used almost daily throughout the six-week unit).

This inventory assignment asks students to do the following:

Write a letter introducing yourself to me. Write from the perspective of your father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, or good friend. You decide! Be sure to include as many of the following details as you can.

- Do you like to read?
- What kinds of literature do you prefer?
- What are your favorite activities to do at home?
- Do you like to go to the library?
- Would you say that you are a good writer?
- How often do you read on your own?
- What is the hardest subject in school for you?
- What kinds of literature would you like to read this year in class?
- Do you prefer to work in groups, or work independently?
- Do you feel comfortable reading aloud in class?
- Is there anything about your school that bothers you?
- What is your favorite book?
- Do you enjoy watching movies?
- Do you keep a diary or journal?
- Would you describe yourself as a good student?
- If you weren't at school, what would you be doing?
- What should I expect from you this year?

Be creative! Be sure and tell me who is writing the letter, and be as specific as you can.

25 min. After I have passed out and reviewed these instructions, students will begin writing.

5 min. Students who have completed the assignment may turn in their notebooks at the front of the room. This will allow me to begin reading them that evening. Students who do not finish may take their notebooks home and bring them back the next day.

Day Two

5 min. Housekeeping and attendance. I will review names by passing back the journals I have graded and collecting new ones.

5-10 min. Tool sharpening. After reading student writing samples, I will notice a skill that needs improvement. An example might be to review the ideas of paragraphs. How do students know when to begin a new paragraph? I will use some examples similar to those in their inventory assignment to work on this.

Adversity Unit-Introductory Activity

15 min I will begin the adversity unit by inviting students to think and write about their own experiences with difficulty. First, I will ask them to take a sheet of white paper and draw a visual representation of their life journey. Their picture will consist of a line that chronologically follows some key events they have experienced. Examples could be something like the birth of a little brother or sister, the onset of adolescence, a hardship at home, or a successful year of ballet. The line can contain steep hills, low dips, curves upwards and downwards. The students can choose what course the line has as it travels across the page. The idea is that the high points of the line represent times of prosperity, while the low points represent times of disappointment or sadness. Some students may have a line that remains mostly straight-that's okay too! Students will label/color their picture as they so desire, labeling several points with key events.

20 min When students complete their drawing, they can compare and contrast the highest point and the lowest point through writing. Students can write informally, remembering different details, emotions, actions, and conversations from that time period. Students should write at least one paragraph per experience. Students can focus on the differences between times of happiness and times of difficulty. Once they are finished, students will break up into small groups to share their pictures and writing with one another. Sharing will not be mandatory, due to the personal nature of the assignment, but students will have the opportunity to share their experiences and pictures if they so desire.

5 min The class period will end with a large-group discussion of different obstacles that

the students have encountered. Each group will be invited to share one or two examples

of low/high points on the various line pictures. Students can compare the

adverse/favorable conditions of others' lives and come to an understanding that adversity

affects all people. **HOMEWORK:** Students will be asked to copy their life map onto a

small note card. They will also be asked to bring a magazine picture, photo, or small piece of artwork that represents adversity in their life. I will provide an example for them to see, such as a picture of a house that is decaying. This could represent poverty or a broken home.



DAY 3

3 min. Housekeeping, attendance. I will pass back the remaining journals containing the first day inventory. I will review names as I do this.

5-8 min. Review the rules of underlining and using quotation marks for different types of literature. In the inventory, the students were asked to list their favorite types of literature. There should be some instances where students forgot to underline book titles, or put book titles in quotations, etc. Use examples from their work to review this.

15 min. I will place a large piece of black poster board on a bulletin board in the room. At the top of the poster board I will have the word ADVERSITY. As the class continues the discussion of adversity, students may approach the poster board one at a time and glue their picture and their life map on the poster board. By the end of the discussion, the class will see a collage of pictures and lifemaps together. This collage will serve as a visual reminder that students have already survived situations of adversity, and will emphasize the relevance of the topic.

5 min. I will issue student copies of Karen Hesse's novel Out of the Dust.

15 min. Each student will have his or her journal back with the completed inventory activity. I will use these fifteen minutes to explain the reading log that they will keep throughout the six-week time period. As a student opens to page three of the journal, the back of page two will be opposite the front of page three. Students will write quotes from the text on the back of page two, and will provide commentary on the text on the front of

page three. This format will allow students to use specific pieces of text in their reading responses.

8 min Students will be asked to turn to the first free-verse poem in the novel. I will model for them the process of doing a reading log using this free verse poem and the white board at the front of the classroom. I will take different verses from the poem and respond to them. I will explain that I am looking for three components in their reading responses: Comprehension, Reflection, and Connection. I won't go over these in depth until Day 4, but I will at least mention them and give examples.

2 min. Students will be assigned pages 1-51 of the novel, and I will hint that there might be a content quiz the following day to ensure that the reading is completed. Students will be encouraged to begin their reading log, and I will ensure that we will continue to work on reading log strategy.

Day 4

3 min. Housekeeping, review names again.

5-8 minutes. Review the concept of citing page numbers in text. This doesn't have to be too detailed, but introduce the general concept of specifying where a quote is coming from. This will allow students to cite quotes in their journals and locate them with page numbers.

10-15 minutes I will ask students to take out a clean sheet of paper, and will give a three question content quiz.

- Who would you say is the main character of Hesse's novel? Why?
- How would you describe the environment in which the story takes place?
- Can you make a prediction about what will happen next in the novel? Why do you think this will occur?

When students have finished writing, they may turn their papers in at the front of the room and read while the others finish.

20 minutes We will use this time to do a whole-class activity with the reading log. I will ask the students to choose a poem from the first 1-51 pages. As a class, we will re-read this poem aloud. On the board, I will make write the three words: Understand, Reflect, and Connect. I will review the difference between these three categories. As students re-read this poem silently, students will have the opportunity to come to the board and write a response to the text choosing one of the three categories. Each student will need to contribute one example.

10 minutes We will discuss these examples as a class, and perhaps move some comments from one category to the next. Students will be assigned another 30 pages of reading for the evening, and asked to continue working on the reading log.

DAY 5

5 min. Housekeeping, attendance, etc. I will review names by handing back the content quizzes from the day before.

5-8 minutes I will explain that students will receive extra points for bringing in examples of grammar/spelling/punctuation mistakes from magazines, newspapers, or books. I will provide an example of this from a current article in the newspaper. We will discuss the error together, and a volunteer will come to the board to write a correct version of the sentence.

15 minutes Students will choose groups of three. After they arrange their desks, I will explain this small group assignment. Each group will choose a poem from the reading. One member will be responsible for explaining what is occurring; one member will be responsible for reflecting on what is happening; one member will be asked to connect the text to his or her life, or to another text. Group members may read the poem aloud to one another, or they may read silently before discussion.

15 minutes The groups will share their poem with the class, and one person from each group will summarize their findings. The class will see different methods of interpreting and thinking about literature, and hopefully will feel more comfortable with writing in their reading response logs.

10 minutes The final minutes of class, students will move their desks back to the original location, and work independently on reading and writing in their response log. The weekend reading will be assigned (another 50 pages) and students will be reminded about continuing writing in the log.

Week Two

Day 6

3 min. Attendance, housekeeping

40 minutes During this time, I will introduce the major unit assignment, which will be a multigenre paper.

10 minutes I will begin the introduction by asking students to do a brief free-write explaining what they learned in class the following week about adversity. I will add that they may incorporate ideas learned during the readings, writings and discussions.

5-10 minutes Students will have the opportunity to share what they have written about adversity. I will note the difference between experiencing adversity and overcoming adversity.

2 min I will pass out the multigenre assignment: (handout pasted here)

Student Introductory Guide

Multigenre Project



Encountering

Adversity

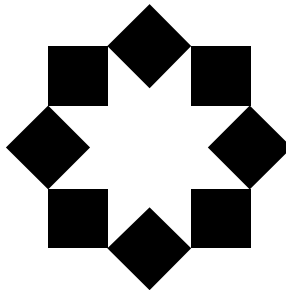
What is this Project? During this project, you will create a multigenre paper. What is a multigenre paper? It is not a story, and it is not a collection of poetry. A multigenre paper is made up of different genres of writing. Each piece can stand by itself, but together, the pieces speak powerfully about a particular topic. Your pieces should work together to communicate with the reader. You can create a multigenre paper when you do good research, reflect on personal experiences, and use your imagination. During this project, you will be reading and responding to the young adult novel Out of the Dust. We will be talking about the adversity that occurs in this piece; these discussions will help you in your writing. You will learn about different writing styles and different genres, and will experiment with those genres by doing some creative writing. Most importantly, this project will help you think about adversity in history, and in your own life, and cause you to appreciate and understand the trials that you experience.

What is a Genre anyway? A genre is a form of writing. Some examples are: plays, dialogues, newspaper articles, poems, novels, and short stories. A genre can even be visual, such as a picture. Some people express themselves best through poetry, while others enjoy writing plays. Through the process of doing this project, you may find the genre that works best for you!!

How do I choose a topic? The title of the project is *Encountering Adversity*. This title can lead you in several different directions. As you read the novel, begin thinking about a specific aspect that interests you. Perhaps you are most concerned with the adversity that Billie Jo herself experiences. Maybe you want to know more about the Great Depression, or the Dust Bowl era. Perhaps you want to think and write about death and the way it changes a family.

Examples

- Compare the adversity in your own life to that found in *Out of the Dust*. Perhaps you experienced heartache over the death of your best friend. Write a diary entry about your experiences. Include a newspaper article that tells about your best friend's car accident. Design your own CD: compile a list of songs that relate to your experiences. You can use excerpts from the book to connect your genres.
- How has a person you know overcome adversity? Write from the perspective of another person. Include a conversation between that person and a trusted friend. Write a poem about that person's adversity. Draw a picture that represents adversity.
- How did the Dust Bowl affect the lives of the inhabitants of the southwestern region? Write from the perspective of a Dust Bowl farmer. Write a letter to the president of the country at that time and explain the hardship.
- I imagine Billie Jo was a boy instead of a girl. How would he experience the Dust Bowl differently? How would he react to the death of his mother? Write from the perspective of this character and include a list of books he would like, a shopping list he would give to his father, and a crossword puzzle that contains words that characterize him.



How do I create a Multigenre Paper? Your multigenre paper should have several different components:

PROLOGUE-The prologue is written for the benefit of the reader. It introduces the reader to the paper and explains why the topic was selected. This should be 1-2 paragraphs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS-Gives the title of your pieces and tells what page they are found on in your paper.

MULTI GENRE SECTIONS-Must have 2 genres. They must be different genres. One genre can be visual. One of your genres must be at least 2 pages typed. This piece will be graded using the Writing Rubric. It can be an essay, short story, diary entry, etc.

Examples of Genres: newspaper article, interview, conversation, memo, diary entry, picture, dialogue, short story, poem, magazine article, song lyrics, shopping lists....

CONNECTORS-These connectors hold your paper together and provide transition. They can be written or visual. Some examples are: Comics, quotes from text or other places, photos, pictures.

What are the steps of the Project?

Participate in Class Discussion of Multigenre Project
Select Specific Topic and complete Topic Selection Writing Assignment
Begin Multigenre Journal
Web Research Activity
Take notes and record in log
Conference with Teacher
Weekly Genre Writings
Participate in 2 Writing Workshops and do content/mechanical edits of other students' pieces
Revise your genre writings after peer reviews and
Locate at least one connector
Write Prologue to your piece
Choose the pieces for your project
Create a Table of Contents
Compile Paper
Present Project

What will be assessed?

Reading Log

Web Research Participation, Notes, and Writing

Writings

Revision Work

Final Project

During the final week, we will spend three days celebrating good writing and visuals! The selected readings will be done during class. You will sign up for a specific day to read. If you plan to show the class an artistic work, see me to create an overhead.

GRADING: *Here is the point breakdown for the multigenre project and related assignments. I'll provide rubrics later.*

Project Log---25 points total (5 points per week)

Web Research Activity-10 points total

Drafts--15 points

Participation in Peer Reviewing-15 points

Revisions-15 points

Final Project-120 points

10 min. I will read through the first two page of this handout, going over the basic information. When we reach the star graphic, we will stop. The information after this graphic is

very specific, and I will save that information for later times so as not to overwhelm them with too much. Giving them the detailed information in advance will give them the opportunity to take it home and read through it on their own. They will also show it to their parents, and bring it back signed for bonus points. I will do this to encourage them to include their parents in what they are doing at school. Students will have opportunity to give examples of other possible topics for their papers.

10 min. I will explain the concept of a summary quiz, and will give a short summary quiz on the reading assigned over the weekend.

5 min. Students will briefly meet in their small groups to talk about what they wrote in their reading logs. Each group will prepare one question on a small 3 by 5 notecard for the next day's class discussion. The notecards will be handed in.

3 min. As the chairs are moved back, I will remind students to read pages 134-149 in Out of the Dust. I will also remind them to continue writing in the log, and to show their parents the copy of the multigenre paper handout.

Day 7

3 min. Attendance, check for signed copies of the multigenre paper handout and give credit in grade book.

8 min. Tool sharpening: Vocabulary enhancement. Talk about the options for using the word "said." Introduce words such as exclaimed, shouted, replied, answered, proclaimed, mumbled, etc. Let students give suggestions, and write several sentences on the board for examples. Allow students to see how using these various words make writing more interesting.

20 min. Allow students to return to their groups. Pass note cards back to the various groups. In a clockwise manner, students will pass their note card to the group next to them. Small groups will have a few minutes to discuss the question before passing it on and receiving a new one.

10 min. Whole class discussion of these questions. One member from each group will summarize the group's findings of the question.

10min. I will guide a discussion that asks students to look at the story and identify the sources of adversity in the lives of the characters. This discussion will be based on the idea of comprehension and reflection. Students will discuss from questions that satisfy the unit goal such as: What are the forces of adversity during this time in American history? What are the difficulties unique to Billy Joe? What adversity is unique to Billy Joe's father? What are the forces of adversity unique to the town in which they live? What difficulties are temporary? What difficulties are permanent?

2 min. Students will re-arrange desks back to original location and I will assign 149-189 for homework.

Day 8

3 min. Attendance, announcements, check for any additional signed multigenre handouts.

8 min. Occasionally, I will use the tool sharpening time to briefly introduce a genre of writing. This day, I will bring in a recent article from a newspaper that describes a situation of adversity. We will discuss the differences between the newspaper writing style, and that of the poetry in Out of the Dust. I will show them how journalistic style writing is very factual and focused, using fewer descriptive words.

10 min. I will give a summary quiz on the previous two reading assignments.

10 min. Students return to groups to discuss what the contents of their reading logs. Each group will write down one question for the class on a notecard.

10 min. Each group will pass their notecard to another group for brief discussions among the small group.

10 min. Whole-class discussion of the questions posed by the various groups.

2 min. Return desks, depart. 193-206 assigned for reading. Each individual student will be asked to bring one question to class from his/her reading logs. Students will be asked to write the question in their reading logs, as well as write it on a sheet of paper to turn in.

Day 9

3 min. Attendance, announcements, check for additional signature on the multigenre handouts, collect questions from the homework.

10 min. Brief introduction of another genre: acrostic. I will provide an example of an acrostic for them to see. We will create an acrostic together as a class on the board, and discuss how it could be used in their multi-genre paper. I will allow students to write examples of their own on the board.

5 min. Each student will choose a partner. Each person will share his/her question from the reading log, and partners will discuss.

10 min. Each pair will join with another pair and have a small group discussion of the questions.

10 min. Whole class discussion of these questions. Each small group will pose one question to the class. I will guide the discussion as necessary, occasionally steering students toward the questions about adversity.

15 min. Students may independently read to finish the novel. Their homework is to respond to the following questions in their reading logs. These questions are reflective and satisfy the unit goals to understand how adversity affects characters in literature:

Do you think the adversity in Billie Joe's life was more helpful or harmful?

How did the difficulties in Billie Joe's life affect her relationship with friends and family? How did the adversity change Billie Joe? Did she respond the same to it at the end of the book as she did at the beginning?

If students finish the reading early, they may write in their reading logs. I will assign any remaining reading for homework, and remind students that they will be turning in their reading logs the following day. I will also remind them to bring their multigenre handout with parent signature if they haven't yet done so-Friday is the last day to receive extra points.

Day 10

3 min. Attendance, housekeeping, check for any signed multigenre handouts.

8 min. Tool sharpening. Talk about the proper use of between and among. Write several sentences on the board and let students volunteer to make corrections.

10 min. Students will get into pairs and discuss their responses to the reading log questions.

15 min. Students will meet in small groups to discuss the reading log questions. Each group will come up with one new question.

17 minutes. Students will have the opportunity to read excerpts from his/her reading log in reference to the homework questions. The remaining time will be spent having one member from each group to pose the new question to the class. I will moderate the discussion, but allow the student-generated questions to guide the discussion.

2 min. Students will turn in their reading logs at the front of the room. The only homework is their usual outside reading assignment. I will remind them that the following Friday will be an outside reading book response day. On this day, I will collect their individual worm charts, which document the outside reading completed during SSR time and at home. Every three weeks, students are required to have 150 pages read in outside reading books. Each student is also required to have 5 new vocabulary words from the outside reading. Students in my classroom will be familiar with this routine, having done it with the regular teacher for one semester.

Week Three

Day 11

3 min. Attendance, announcements.

15 minutes Pass back the reading logs, which should have my comments and encouragement. On the board or overhead, I will put several examples of exemplary work for students to see and discuss. I will not use examples from that specific class, so students will not be able to know the identity of the writer. I will not use student work as negative examples.

35 min. A look at language-understanding similes and metaphors. Students may or may not have picked up on the fact that dust is a powerful metaphor in the novel. Students may not be familiar with the concept of a metaphor. It would be beneficial to introduce this after the reading of the text, so their reading of the novel is not centered on understanding the metaphor. At this point, the book is still very fresh, and students can hopefully understand the importance of this concept in the literature.

10 minutes Introduce literary terms “metaphor” and “simile.” Give brief definitions. Present students with copies of “The Fish.” Put a copy of this poem on the overhead projector, and ask for a volunteer to read the first few lines. Model the identification of a simile and the identification of a metaphor in the poem.

10 minutes Allow students to read the poem silently and to identify one example of simile and one example of metaphor. Some students may have trouble with this, so small group time will follow.

10 minutes Students meet in small groups to discuss their findings. I will circulate the room to help with questions, and encourage students to notice how these devices enhance the text.

5 minutes Each group presents one example to the class and I answer any lingering questions.

“The Fish” by Elizabeth Bishop

I caught a tremendous fish
And held him beside the boat
Half out of water, with my hook
Fast in a corner of his mouth.
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
Battered and venerable
And homely. Here and there
His brown skin hung in strips
Like ancient wallpaper,
And its pattern of darker brown
Was like wallpaper:
Shapes like full-blown roses
Stained and lost through age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
Fine rosettes of lime,
And infested with tiny white sea-lice,
And underneath two or three
Rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
The terrible oxygen
-the frightening gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that can cut so badly-
I thought of the coarse white flesh
Packed in like feathers,
The big bones and the little bones,
The dramatic reds and blacks
Of his shiny entrails,
And the pink swim-bladder like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
Which were far larger than mine

But shallower, and yellowed,
The irises backed and packed
With tarnished tinfoil
Seen through the lenses
Of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
To return my stare.
-It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
The mechanism of his jaw,
And then I saw
That from his lower lip
-if you could call it a lip-
grim, wet, and weaponlike,
hung five old pieces of fish-line,
or four and a wire leader
with the swivel still attached,
with all their five big hooks
grown firmly in his mouth.
A green line, frayed at the end
Where he broke it, two heavier lines,
And a fine black thread
Still crimped from the strain and snapped
When it broke and he got away.
Like medals with their ribbons
Frayed and wavering
A five-haired beard of wisdom
Trailing from his aching jaw.
I stared and stared
And victory filled up
The little rented boat,
From the pool of bilge
Where oil had spread a rainbow
Around the rusted engine
To the bailer rusted orange,
The sun-cracked thwarts,
The oarlocks on their strings,
The gunnels-until everything
Was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
And I let the fish go.

2 min. Pass out homework sheet:

Today we discussed the use of metaphor and simile in Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Fish." Tonight, refer back to Out of the Dust. Re-read the first poem in the

novel. Look for examples of simile and metaphor. Record your findings in the reading log.

Day 12

3 min. Attendance, etc.

10 min. Review any lingering examples or questions from “The Fish.”

5 minutes Take a look at poem “Beginnings: August 1920” in the novel. First, students will take turns reading this aloud.

10 minutes Students will break up into small groups and come up with one example of simile or metaphor. They will discuss how this is effective in the writing.

10 minutes Whole class discussion of these examples. Each group will present one example from their collective findings. I will have to feel out how they are understanding this concept, and may need to guide the discussion, depending on how it is going. We may need to do another example.

10 minutes I will guide the class in writing our own metaphor. We will write a four-line poem using one of the elements.

2 minutes As students pack and move desks back, I will ask that they each create their own free verse poem involving the use of simile or metaphor. They may use “The Fish” or “Beginnings: August 1920” as a model. This will allow them to experiment with these elements without receiving penalty for making an error. Hopefully, this will encourage them to perhaps use these devices in their multigenre papers. Students will turn in these examples the following day.

Day 13

3 min Attendance, collect free verse poems.

10 minutes Explain 2-Day Web Research Assignment. This day will serve to model the web research that a student could do for his or her multigenre project. Students will be given the following information:

Today we will be going to the computer lab to do some research for our multigenre papers. Over the past two weeks, we have read about Billie Joe, and her experiences in the Dust Bowl. Now we are ready to do a little research to find out more about this time in history. With a partner, please visit the following website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/>

This website gives plenty of good information about the Dustbowl. When you reach the main page, you will decide what you want to read about. Here are your choices:

- *An Eyewitness Account*-A Kansas wheat farmer’s account of how he survived the Dust Bowl (located under Special Features)
- *New Deal Remedies*-The government responds to the plight of Dust Bowl farmers (located under Special Features)

- *Timeline of the Dust Bowl*-gives a chronological description of the Dust Bowl events (under Timeline)
- *Map of Dust Bowl*-gives a map of the Dust Bowl region (under “maps”)

Descriptions of Influential People (under “people and events”)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt
 John McCarty
 Hugh Hammond Bennett
 Bam White

Descriptions of Dust Bowl Events

The Great Depression
 The Drought
 Black Sunday
 Mass Exodus from the Plains
 The New Deal
 Works Progress Administration

You must choose a minimum of two items from the top, two people, and two events. Read each text twice. The second time you read each text, write down five important facts. Each pair must turn in their notes at the end of the period.

5 minutes I will pull up one article from the website on the class computer, which can be displayed on the television screen. I will provide examples of good and bad note-taking.

30 minutes Class goes to computer lab for web research. As students are working, I will circulate around to check progress and answer any questions and check their progress.

5 minutes Come back to class and pack up. Students will turn in their notes. Homework sheet given, and students reminded about book response at the end of the week:

We will soon begin writing our multigenre papers. Our first step is to choose a topic. Tonight, refer to the multigenre paper handout that I have given you. Look at the list of topics and begin brainstorming about what kind of paper you would like to do. In the space provided, write about a possible topic. For each topic, write a 1-2 sentence rationale, or reason, for why you are choosing your topic. (This will stir students' thoughts about their project, and allow them to think about their project during the web research, which will be helpful to their writing).

Day 14

3 min. Attendance and collect topic selections. Hand back simile/metaphor examples.

10 min. Review note-taking, using student work as good examples. Hand back the notes to each pair of students.

30 min. Return to the computer lab for continuation of web research. Students who finish before others can investigate additional articles. An extra website for students who exhaust PBS website is: http://www.weru.ksu.edu/pics/dust_storms/

10 min. Return to the classroom, and explain the assignment that students will do on Friday. Each pair will collaborate with another pair to form a group of four. In this group, students will write a diary entry, newspaper article, letter, etc. Each group can use this time to discuss and choose a genre. Students will use their web research to create this text.

2 min. Students pack up, and I will remind them about the book response day on Friday. Students will need to make sure their worm charts are filled out and will need to review their five vocabulary words for the book response.

Day 15

3 min. Attendance, collect "worm charts," hand back topic selections.

10-15 minutes Give content quiz of the outside reading books. Ask student to give the vocabulary words that they learned, and provide a brief definition.

30 minutes Small group work on creating a genre from web research.

10 minutes Each group can present their work to the class. Turn in work at end.

2 minutes Students should finalize their topic selections, and begin writing about ideas for genres in their logs. The reading log will now be considered more of a project log, in which they record their ideas and drafts of their multigenre papers.

Now that the web research is complete, students have walked through analysis of adversity, analysis of literary devices, and analysis of background information. They are not ready to do a write a more formal literary analysis of the novel. Let them know that on Monday, they will do an in-class writing to turn in. The writing will be based on a selected poem from the novel. Suggest that they review the concepts and discussions that we've had during class.



Week Four

Day 16

3 min. Pass back the content quizzes from the outside reading books.

5 min. Any remaining groups can present their in-class writings from Friday.

40 min. Pass out the following instructions and review before letting students begin.

Over the past several weeks, we have discussed the novel Out of the Dust. We have looked at the novel in three different ways. We have discussed the adversity in the novel and its effect upon the characters. We have looked at the special use of language in the novel. We have also done some research to help us understand the historical background. Now you will have the opportunity to show what you have learned.

Using the poem “Night Bloomer” on page 81 of your novel, write three paragraphs; there should be one paragraph for each of the three categories we have discussed. Identify the adversity that is discussed in this particular poem, and provide details about that adversity and its effect upon the characters involved. Discuss in another paragraph the use of special language. In the third paragraph, discuss what historical information you find there and draw upon your research to explain the situation. Follow the rules of the writing rubric, which I will use to assess this writing.

5 min. Students turn in work and prepare to leave. I remind them to keep working in their project log. At this point, the students have already written a free-verse poem, and a short introductory paragraph about personal experiences with adversity. I will let them know that they can revise these writings to put into their multigenre paper, and will recommend ways that they can tie these works together. I will let them know that Tuesday will be a writing day for their two page piece; they should come prepared to start on this piece for their paper.

Day 17

3 min. Attendance, etc.

5 min. Tool sharpening. Review the use of commas in writing after noticing problems in student papers the night before.

40 min. It will work well to have students working independently on their multigenre writing this day. I will have piles of papers to grade from the day before, and this day will allow me to get some of this work completed so I can get the papers back in a timely manner.

5 minutes. I will ask students to share their project ideas with the class and comment on what they are writing and planning. Students should complete any remaining writing on their first genre for homework, and I will remind them about the writing workshop days on Wednesday and Thursday.

Day 18

3 min. Attendance, announcements.

5 min. Review difference between its and it's, and their and they're.

40 min. Writing Workshop. Students will get into small groups of 4-5 people. Students will read their work aloud to the group, who will make comments about the content only. Each person will staple his or her own comments to the back of the draft, and will sign the draft as proof that they participated. I will use some of this time to conference with individual students about their projects and answer any specific questions.

5 minutes Students may ask questions related to the project, or begin revision work. Homework is the content revision. The following day will be a mechanical edit day.

Day 19

3 min. Attendance, announcements.

5 min. Review importance of diction in writing. Write two sample sentences on the board that display good and bad diction. Stress importance of using special words to enhance writing.

40 min. Writing Workshop with mechanical edit. Each member of the small group will read another member's paper and make notes in regard to mechanics. When the group finishes, the writers may begin work on revising their own papers. During this workshop, I will begin calling various students to my desk for a personal conference on their multigenre project.

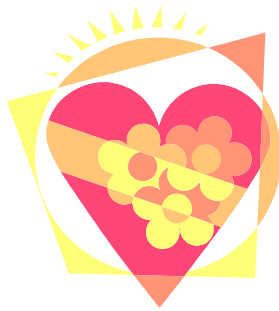
5 min. Answer questions. I will announce that the following day will be given for students to write their final draft of this genre. Students will have the option of going to the lab to type up their work. They may also type their final draft at home, and begin work on their second piece.

Day 20

15 min. Announcements and attendance, etc. Pass back the literary analysis pieces. Provide examples of exemplary student work. Discuss problem areas.

40 min. Students may type or handwrite their final draft of the first genre. I will conference with remaining students on their multi-genre project. Those who finish early may do independent reading.

5 min. Students turn in final drafts.



Week Five

Day 21

3 min. Attendance, etc.

7 min. Introduce another genre—as a class, create a shopping list that a well-known character from literature (such as Cinderella) would make. I will not use a character from Out of the Dust, so students who choose to use this genre will be able to create an original list using the novel. Review ways that students can use their web research notes to help them create this list.

30 min. In-class student writing on the second piece for the multigenre paper. I will use this time to assess the drafts that came in on Friday, and conference with any students who need guidance.

10 min. Students may meet with a partner to talk about the piece that they are writing, and get any recommendations. Remind them about project log.

Day 22

3 min. Attendance, etc. Hand back any drafts that are teacher-reviewed.

15 min. The multigenre papers require a brief one-two paragraph prologue at the beginning. During this time, I will provide a sample prologue and post on overhead.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to my multi-genre paper, a creation intended to give you a glimpse into the inner workings of a young girl's heart. This piece is not about me, but about an orphaned girl from a foreign land. I met her a few months ago when her adopted father asked me to spend some time helping her with English. Since that time, we have begun a beautiful friendship. More than anything else, I want to be a friend to her, despite the 6 years that separate us.

My new friend has experienced tremendous adversity in her brief life of 15 years. She was born in a poor Eastern European country, and spent the first 8 years living with her mother in a dangerous area of town. Her father disappeared shortly after her birth. When she was 8, she witnessed the murder of her mother. A couple in America adopted her shortly after the murder, and brought her to the United States where she spent 6 wonderful years learning English and adjusting to American life and her new family. She was very close to her mother. This past summer, her adopted mother suddenly collapsed during dinner, and died of a heart attack before the ambulance could arrive. She now lives with her adopted father in a wealthy suburban area in Athens.

This piece is about how a young girl overcomes adversity. I use several different genres to give you a look into the hopeful heart of someone who has experienced severe trials. Read these pieces in any order you would like, and re-read as you wish. Allow these pieces to inspire you and help you to endure your own hardships.

30 minutes Students will use this time to write their own prologue, as well as work on the second piece for their multigenre paper. I will conference with students and finish assessing their first piece. By the period's end, I should be able to pass back the first pieces so that students can take them home.

5 minutes Answer any questions about the project, and give homework, which is to complete the second piece and the prologue by Thursday for typing in the computer lab. Remind students to keep working on project log.

Day 23

3 min. Attendance, etc.

10 min. Review the idea of connectors. Provide quotes from the text that could serve as good connectors in the multigenre piece. Explain that connectors can be pictures, such as the ones students used in the introductory activity. Let students find their own in the novel and discuss.

35 minutes In-class student writing of prologue, second piece, needed revision of first piece. Any remaining writing needs to be completed by the following day.

10 minutes Review how students can put together the multigenre project in a folder, binder, or notebook. Review the table of contents, and allow students a few minutes to create their own table of contents. Exit

Day 24

3 min. Attendance, etc.

40 min. Students go to computer lab for typing of final drafts.

10 min Students return back to room to punch holes in paper, put together project, etc. Any students who are finished can turn it in.

Day 25

3 min. Attendance, etc.

25 minutes. Day to celebrate student writing! Students will form small groups to read excerpts from their writing and share about their project.

25 minutes Students volunteers will read from their work to the whole class.

2 minutes Collect projects and exit.