

THE CHANGE

Julie Millan

The results were quite impressive. Students thoroughly enjoyed taking their reading “to the next level.” The biggest improvement seemed to be in terms of educating themselves about the world around them and finding out more information about the particular issues in their books such as poverty and homelessness, child slavery, war, environmental issues, health issues and hunger. Students found many websites and organizations related to particular topics or issues and shared them with each other. Enrollment in existing clubs such as Free The Children increased significantly. Students organized more fundraising opportunities throughout the year as well. We did not, however, find that students were able to reach that level of stimulating others to take action – yet! In addition, so many teachers were impressed with the idea and the results that they have asked to participate in the literature circles this year.

In planning for this year, we realize that we need to do the literature circles earlier in the year, allowing students more time to investigate, share, participate, and organize opportunities for action within the school. We are also exploring changing literature circles units to information circles, and adapting a unit for use with students at many grade levels. Moving beyond just novels, we would introduce such resources as picture books, non-fiction articles, videos and websites. Finally, we realized that the language of global citizenship needs to be woven into our classroom (and perhaps even school) language all year long, continuously reminding students of their potential and the opportunities to “be the change you wish to see in the world.” ■

Grade: 6, 7, 8 and 9		Topic: Rehabilitation and Care Cared For/Education and Play Protection/ Survival and Development	
Curriculum Area: Language Arts all grades, Social Studies: Grade 6-Canada's Links to the World		Title: Modified Literature Circles	
U.N. Rights of the Child Article(s):		Teaching Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect. (Article 39) All children have a right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily. (Article 6) All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities. (Article 31) Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence (Article 19) 		<p>These books are being recommended in this format to allow all of the students in one class to read different books around a similar theme. The purpose is to create awareness of the impact of war (and in the case of <i>Iqbal</i>, forced child labour) on children from many parts of the world.</p> <p>Placing the students into groups of 6, introduce the concept of the modified literature circle where everyone contributes to open-ended discussions (both in asking questions and exploring their opinions). All questions must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open ended, I wonder type of questions Allow for the free exchange of opinions Be based on the novel in question Discussed by everyone in the group 	
Information Studies: Overall Expectations		<p>To introduce the concept of open-ended questions, use the picture book <i>The Wolf Who Loved Music</i> (or <i>The Carpet Boy's Gift</i>). Stop at an appropriate spot in the book and model the questioning process. Make sure that your question provokes discussion, elicits opinions and sparks conversation. Model the process several times within the book. The ending leaves many unanswered questions. Break the students into groups of 4-6 and have them pose their questions and discuss opinions. This will be the process used for the literature circle. The groups will set their own reading targets, and each member will arrive with a question they want to discuss with the group. (See black line masters below). In essence, all of the participants will be “discussion directors”.</p>	
<p>For specific grade-level expectations, refer to <i>Information Studies: Kindergarten to Grade 12</i> (OSLA 1999).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Girl of Kosovo</i> <i>Thura's Diary</i> <i>Year of No Rain</i> <i>Iqbal</i> <i>The Breadwinner</i> <i>Parvana's Journey</i> <i>Mud City</i> <i>The Heaven Shop</i> <i>The Wolf Who Loved Music</i> <i>The Carpet Boy's Gift</i> <p>Additional novels to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Journey to Jo'burg</i> <i>The Road to Chlifa</i> (Gr. 9-language issues, sexual awareness) <i>Sea Chase</i> <i>The Mzungu Boy</i> <i>The Diary of Ma Yan</i> 		<p>Once all of the groups have completed the novels and discussions, have the groups prepare a dramatic presentation of the thoughts, realities and conflict in the novel that had the greatest impact on them.</p> <p>To further augment the learning, a series of black line masters have been prepared for individuals to complete on their own. The package as a whole allows for the teacher and teacher-librarian to have reading, writing and oral language marks for assessment.</p> <p>Black Line Masters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract Meetings Needs, Wants & Dreams (2) Talking Props Journal Entry Decision Train Word Study News Connect Poster 	
BE THE CHANGE... Suggestions for Action			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell 10 people (family or friends) what you have learned about the realities of the lives of the children in your book, or create a presentation to explain to others in your school Write a letter or postcard to a world leader, newspaper, or magazine outlining how this book and what you have learned has impacted you and why it is important that change occurs 			

Modified Literature Circles
www.accessola.com/bethechange