

Chapter 2

Affective and Social Aspects of Content Area Learning and Literacy

Key Concepts

- affective domain (p. 27)
- aliteracy (p. 31)
- cooperative learning (p. 49)
- culturally responsive teaching (p. 28)
- interest inventory (p. 35)
- learning centers (p. 43)
- listening questions (p. 35)
- literary fieldtrip (p. 41)
- motivation (p. 29)
- scaffold (p. 34)
- workshop approach (p. 50)
- zone of proximal development (p. 34)

Discussion / Essay Questions

1. In the study about successful dyslexics, what surprise did the data analysis provide the researcher? What hypothesis of hers was not confirmed? What implications might the findings have for content area teachers?
2. Define *aliteracy*. How much of a problem do you expect it will be when you are a teacher? What are some things you plan to do to alleviate aliteracy among your students?
3. Give an example from your own learning or teaching that shows your understanding of Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development.
4. Picture yourself reading aloud to your class, and evaluate your oral reading ability at this point. Describe your strengths, or mention some steps you might take to improve this important skill.
5. Give an example of a particular content area lesson (or topic) where it will be important to tap into students' affective domains, and then describe ways you might accomplish this.
6. Practice using listening questions during a conversation with a student, friend, or family member. Give an example of what you said that could be considered a listening question.

7. What constitutes a learning center? Describe some of the things that you would include in a learning center about a particular topic in a course you might teach.
8. What is the difference between internal and external motivation? Give an example of each from your own learning or from a practicum experience in which you've been involved.

Classroom Discussion / Activity Ideas

I relate to my class the true story of a teacher who told parents at a school open house that they should not expect their children to find ninth-grade social studies interesting, since the curriculum is all related to ancient times. I express my concern over the teacher's lack of enthusiasm and proceed to show my class my "Ancient Civilization Box," filled with trade books, art work, software, and games relating to the topic. We have library time for students to explore the sample of the rich resources that are available to enhance curriculum. This leads to a discussion of passion for the subject one has chosen to teach. I give booktalks for *Starry Messenger*, by Peter Sis, and *A Beautiful Mind*, by Sylvia Nasar—both biographies of passionate practitioners. Students also share passions they have experienced in their own learning lives.

I invite a guest speaker to my classroom, a colleague whom I have dubbed a geologist/poet. Using a PowerPoint presentation, she shares poems she has written about gems and minerals and answers our questions about her writing process and her passions. Students are given an assignment to create a poem relating to an object or concept in their curriculum. For example, preservice math teachers might choose a compass, an algorithm, a calculator, or math anxiety. During the following class, students meet in small groups to share drafts and give each other feedback and suggestions. Final drafts, along with pictures, which students can draw or find on the Internet or in a book, are collected and placed in a class book for all to enjoy.

I take my students on a "literary field" trip before they had read about this strategy (pp. 41–43; 46). I use the text described in the book, *The National Civil Rights Museum Celebrates Everyday People*, by Alice Faye Duncan. Of course, you can substitute another book of your own choosing. On a subsequent day, I introduce the picture books *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, by Robert Coles, and *Through My Eyes*, by Ruby Bridges (p. 46). Students compare and contrast the story and the memoir and then watch an excerpt of the video *Ruby Bridges*. They discuss ways they can use trade books, videos, and DVDs in their future classrooms.



After your students have read the Activating Prior Knowledge boxed texts, encourage them to go to the Kane Resource Site, at www.hhpcommunities.com/kane, to share their thoughts about what they feel passionate about, whether they consider themselves readers, and how they feel about reading out loud in class.

Additional Activity

Action Research: Content Area Teachers and Literacy

Interview one or more middle school or high school students about their interests and their self-initiated reading. Inquire about their attitudes and values related to school in general and the subject you intend to teach in particular. Analyze the data you collect and discuss possible implications for your future teaching. Share your findings on the Kane Resource Site, at www.hhpcommunities.com/kane,

Student Sample Assignments

Literacy Fieldtrips

The text I chose for a literacy fieldtrip was *Strange Animals of Australia*, by Toni Eugene. It is a book put out by the National Geographic Society and targets young learners.

In preparing my students for this field trip, my first task is to gauge the students' knowledge of the subject by asking a couple of questions about the topic. Here are some questions one might ask:

- What types of animals do you expect to see in Australia?
- What is the climate like in Australia? What animals would not be found there?
- Can you think of animals that can be found only in Australia?

After I write my students' responses on the board, I might ask them to pretend they were at the Australian National Zoo, and ask them:

- What kinds of questions might you ask our tour guide?
- What types of species would you like to know more about?
- What would you like to learn about species you never knew existed?

After they separate into groups and read the text, I would have each group become experts on one of the animals they found interesting and report to the class what they have learned. The groups would also respond to the questions they originally thought up and add information they found interesting. This shows what they have learned from the reading.

I could also do a follow-up to this activity by providing other books about how animals are unique to different continents. Students could also research on the Internet or watch videos or DVDs found in the school library. This follow-up would help to promote the idea that learning doesn't stop when you leave the classroom, and promotes reading for pure enjoyment and knowledge.

Anonymous

An adventure in the wilderness can be quite exhilarating, but also quite dangerous. Prepare for this mountain field trip by first predicting your environment, then planning ahead to determine what you'll need when you get there, and we'll be on our way!

What do you know about the Adirondack Mountains? What could you guess about the terrain and land?

What kinds of animals do you think you'll encounter? How should you act around them? Are any of them dangerous?

What kind of gear should you bring for a hike? What kinds of clothes should you wear?

What questions do you have for your wilderness guide, Paul Schneider?

What do you hope to learn from this field trip?

OK, now open *The Adirondacks*, by Paul Schneider, and begin your hike through history and the wilderness. As you go, jot down any new experiences and memories you pick up along the way.

What was the most surprising thing you've learned from your trip through the wild?

Could you have made the trip without an expert guide?

Was the scenery what you expected? What about the wildlife?

Ryan Fagan (pre-service social studies teacher)

TEACHER TO STUDENTS: Before we get started, I'd like you all to draw a quick timeline. Just jot down some ages at which you'll be reaching some milestones. For example, at age 16 you'll get your driver's license, at age 18 you'll graduate from high school, and so on. Use my examples to write down a quick timeline of what you expect to happen in your life.

Now let's pretend we're back in medieval England. I need all of you to separate into two groups: one group for the boys, one group for the girls. Bring your timeline with you as you separate into groups.

If we were living in medieval times, all of you boys would already be out of your house working on an apprenticeship. You would be expected to learn, progress, and grow in your new environment. Now gentlemen, how would you feel right now if you were out on your own working to make a living? You wouldn't be comfortable and warm in class today; you wouldn't be taking a break in a while for a good lunch and then some time outside. You would spend your whole day working hard, with few, if any, breaks throughout the day. Do you think at your age you could handle that?

Now girls, you are on your way to marriage, if you aren't married already. You're also about to start a family soon. How many of you are ready to be married? How many of you are ready to become mothers? Is this the path you want to go down at your age?

How would each of you feel if this were your life? Take a few minutes and write down some feelings about this life of yours. Do you like it? Do you miss your friends? Would you rather be outside visiting with friends than inside working or taking care of your children? What other thoughts do you have about your life?

Now let's read about *Matilda Bone* by Karen Cushman. A girl, not much older than any of you, is dropped off by her father to set bones in a back alley. She must now live among people she has never met before, complete strangers. What would you do if you were put into this situation? How would you react? Would you be able to handle the pressures, or would you prefer to run home to your family? Let's see how Matilda deals with these issues.

Thank you all for your participation. You are a wonderful group of workers and married mothers. For those of you who are still “underage,” consider yourselves lucky.

Nichole Ince

When reading *A Tale of Two Cities*, we could learn about places in London that were important to Dickens. We could read *Dickens: A Biography*, by Peter Ackroyd or *The World of Dickens: A Pitkin Pictorial Biography*. I would ask students to think about the following questions when touring Dickens’ London:

1. What looks familiar in Dickens’ surroundings and where have you seen it before in his writing?
2. What is it about these places that may have inspired Dickens to write?
3. Did he have any acquaintances that remind you of a particular character?
4. If you were to experience life in Dickens’ world, how might it affect your views?
5. Would it inspire you in some way?

To give them an even better idea of Dickens’ world, I would invite them to tour the Dickens House Museum, which can be found on the web at www.dickensmuseum.com .

Colleen Meggison

Interest Inventory

I looked at an English 9 Regents syllabus for Oswego High School. Based on this syllabus, the following is an interest inventory that I would give these students:

1. How familiar are you with different styles of poetry, such as haikus, odes and sonnets? Have you ever written a poem? Do you have a favorite poem? Do you think poems have to rhyme?
2. Would you rather read a play, write a play, be in a play, or see a play? Have you seen or read any of Shakespeare’s plays?
3. Do you know anyone with a physical disability? How familiar are you with his or her disability? Would you be willing to share your knowledge with the class?
4. What do you want to be when you grow up? How are you going to accomplish this goal?
5. What is your favorite myth or fairytale? What makes it so important to you?

Colleen Meggison

Poetry

MesoAmericans

indigenous

proud

complex

human beings

Machu Pichu
Quetzacoatl
Teotihuacan

Tops of mountains
Dense, wet forests
Stacked rock pueblos
their common homes.

Tragic, religious warriors
sacrificed for progress.

Their God, the Sun
could not save them
from the violent worship
of the God of Gold.

Charlene Porter

You don't want to take economics?

You say economics is one course you won't stand,
and you don't see what's so important about supply and demand.

And some of the examples are enough to make you shudder.
Why would you ever need a model where it's "guns vs. butter"?

Then just when you think you've heard it all,
you get hit with a term like "parato-optimal."

But economics is where we weigh wants and resources,
Its importance is as great as your other courses.

Wasn't there ever something you wanted or craved,
but your pockets were empty and you wished you had saved?

Or you had some money you needed to decide how to spend,
how did you decide, on the advice of a friend?

Just another thought to put into the mix,
is how for years you've already studied economics.

Process note: First I decided on a topic in social studies. Then I thought of how students may not be interested in it and tried to start at their point of view, then explain why it is relevant to them. I was not comfortable during the process because I do not really read poetry.

Don Stone

Digesting Digestion

In the mouth we begin,
Where all the food goes in.
Chewing and chewing, saliva secreting
Simple sugars breaking and creaking!

Soon we swallow our mush
Down, down the esophagus.
By peristalsis it all goes down the hatch
To the stomach where the mush is no match!

Stomach and pancreas
Always assisting us,
Grinding up gunk, adding amazing enzymes
The food will be absorbed in amazing time!

Muscles tensing and squeezing
Intestines succeeding
Absorption of fine nutrients and water
At last, with excretion we'll go no farther!

Process note: When I started I just wrote down a list of topics and picked one. I brainstormed words that went with it and visited www.discoveryhealth.com to refresh myself on the subject. I then began writing it—it took longer than I ever would have imagined—about 2 hours from start to finish! I then shared it with some friends for feedback—after that I changed a few words and eventually added a picture and finally reached my final piece.

Amanda Graham

Student Responses to the Chapter

Literacy Fieldtrips

I think literary fieldtrips are a wonderful idea!

Fieldtrips have always been a good way to make learning more exciting. I think the best one I ever went on was when my 10th grade Humanities class went to the Shakespeare Festival in Canada. We saw a production of *Macbeth* and toured a warehouse that had many sets, props,

and costumes. I leaned a lot and had a great time. Other fieldtrips I enjoyed were to the Frederick Remington Museum and the Erie Canal Museum.

But in the district where I have my practicum, school finances are not what they once were. Budgets have been slashed, and fieldtrips are a rarity. Valuable learning experiences are being lost, but through books, students can use their imaginations and visit any number of far-off places. They could go to Seneca Falls during a unit on the Women's Rights Movement, for example. Through books and the Internet, they could visit almost any museum.

In writing this entry, I wondered how helpful the Internet could be for these fieldtrips of the mind. I found websites devoted to both the Shakespeare Festival and the Remington Museum. On the site dedicated to the Erie Canal Museum, there is an online store where teachers and/or students can purchase books about the Erie Canal. If you're interested, these are the URLs for those sites:

1. Shakespeare Festival: <http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/>
2. Erie Canal Museum: <http://www.eriecanalmuseum.org/>
3. Remington Museum: <http://www.fredericremington.org>

Although not as good as books, movies are another way to transport students to inaccessible times and places. Students could view movies after school so as not to waste valuable class time. For extra credit, students could watch movies and respond to them, tying the themes of the movies into topics being discussed in class. Throw in a bag of popcorn and some sodas, and it might even be fun!

Students today have an inexhaustible wealth of information at their fingertips. Through movies, computers, and books, students can travel places that we would not have been able to imagine 50 years ago. Teachers need to be familiar with these various tools so that budget cuts do not impede in the intellectual growth of their students.

Colleen Meggison

Activating Prior Knowledge 2.1

When I was younger, I always wanted to know everything there was to know about cars. Every one that passes by me, I can just about name to you. I can't always tell the year, but I can usually recognize the make and model. When I was younger, I even used to make my mother pull into car lots, past closing time, so that we could look at cars and not get bothered by sales people.

My brother is the person responsible for this passion. Because he's five years older than me, he started driving when I was 11. Before he even got his license, however, he was buying stereo equipment for his future car. Once he passed his road test, my grandfather bought him a tattered black 1988 Chevrolet Beretta GT. It was an ugly little car, but my brother wasn't going to let that stop him. He worked until he saved up enough money to get it a new paint job and some chrome rims for the tires. He eventually even painted the rear brakes yellow to make for a nice contrast with the shiny new black paint. I was amazed at what a little elbow grease could do to such a car.

After that, my imagination ran wild. I started reading the car reviews in the paper, and watching “Car & Driver” on the television every Saturday morning. Saturday morning cartoons were a thing of the past for me. I went on to bigger and better things.

Still today, I find myself searching online for the newest cars and finding out what great technological things they have to offer. When I have the time to tune into “Car & Driver,” my face is glued to the screen. The car of my dreams is, and as far as I can see, always will be, a midnight blue BMW M3 convertible!

Judith Koscinski

I have always had a fascination with firemen and firefighting. I have been absolutely amazed by their courage and their willingness to help others. I admire the way that they forsake their own safety, and sometimes their lives, for those who need their help. My father was a volunteer fireman in my hometown. It was a one-truck operation, and only 10 men were needed as volunteers to fulfill the duties, but they were always going out in the middle of the night, for no pay. He was my primary source of information on the topic and encouraged me to read books on the subject when I was very little and first starting to read. There was a picture book that told the story of a firefighter responding to a fire, and how a heroic Dalmatian saved the house’s puppy. I would check it out every time my mother would walk me to the end of our block to the library, a regular Friday afternoon event in my youth. She tried to encourage me to read another book, but I was too engrossed in the subject. After September 11, 2001, all of America gained a respect and admiration for those men and women, and my respect and admiration only grew.

Calvin Heinle

I find that I have been very interested in a number of topics—but calling it passion is a bit harder for me. Maybe that is because I have found that I can be interested in a vast number of things. And I suppose I am passionate about learning new things. I have sometimes thought I just craved change, but in fact I love being immersed in an idea that I have not experienced before. For example, from high school onwards I have really enjoyed photography, and with the era of digitalization I have come to love digital photography and graphics. At first, I would browse the budget section of bookstores looking for books on Photoshop, and then I began to ask for art books and digital design books for birthdays and Christmas. When I visited The Strand bookstore in New York City, I found I had spent every minute in the design section of the store. I took a couple of summer courses on how to work with digital photos and became even more excited. My nephew and I chatted over the course of a year or so about his work in web design and my interest in snapshots turned art. He was as excited as I, and I left those conversations even more focused. I also found a great deal of information on the Web, and began the tedious process of sifting through the vast resources I found there. It wasn’t long before I located my own “guru”—someone’s whose work I loved and tutorials I thought were great. Shan Canfield—I don’t think I will ever forget her. I searched YouTube for her videos, read her recommendations for resources, and very nearly contacted her a number of times. It wasn’t long before a friend and I were launching a business based on the concept of converting your memories into wall art. I guess I would qualify that as a passion after all.

Karen Springer

Activating Prior Knowledge 2.2

Am I a reader? Upon reflection, I've come to the conclusion that I am a reader with a terrible case of approach avoidance. I tend to be so busy that I don't start reading—then when I do, I have a hard time balancing my reading with the rest of my life, so it starts the cycle over again. I wish I was more like my husband who simply reads each night at some point and some time on the weekends as well. When I do read, I love it—I breathe books deeply. I'm not a fast reader, but I get completely immersed in the story. I really enjoy symbolism and allegory. And a good adventure or a fairy tale. I am a fan of C.S. Lewis and George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton. *Winterflight* by Joseph Bayley was thought provoking, as was *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young. I loved *The Book of the Dun Cow* by Walter Wangerin, and *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. I got hung up in *Bones Would Rain from the Sky* by Suzanne Clothier and didn't finish it. Right now I am reading *Flatland* by Edwin Abbott for my Book Talk. I guess it is hard to call myself a reader when I compare myself to my husband and kids—they all read a lot more than I do, but can I call myself a “wannabe reader”?

Karen Springer

Am I a reader? Well, the answer to that question isn't as easy as “yes” or “no.” Plain and simple, I LOVE TO READ, but that doesn't mean that I particularly LIKE to read, especially when it is school related. I can never follow textbooks. I find myself rereading things many times before I understand them. And, reading books in high school? That was unheard of. I hated having to pick things apart. It made me lose all interest in reading anything that was assigned. Even in my first two years of college, I never read whole books because of all the analysis that was involved.

Judith Koscinski

Are you a reader? NO! I must be prodded, nudged, cajoled, and hog-tied in order to read anything. Prior to my return to school I would read minimally in the *Reader's Digest* and *Yankee Magazine*, skim through information for work, and read *The Bible* daily. I enjoy reading very little, and I struggle for comprehension, especially in textbooks with the distractions of citing sources, creating focal points, and where many of the words are created by the author.

In my earlier stint in school I read very little, used Cliff or Monarch notes whenever available, and in high school found an English teacher who would pass me if I came to class and participated .

Until now, I would consider myself aliterate. I do not become “engaged” in reading.

Scott Douglas

Activating Prior Knowledge 2.3

“Learning is social.” That statement says, to me, that learning is an interactive process. At first glance I thought it meant that it occurred best in a group setting with other people. But I think that is not necessarily true. I think of the statements like, “As I was growing up, books were my best friends.” or “My kindred spirit is Anne, in *Anne of Green Gables*.” These statements show that there can be a relationship developed in what we read, with the

characters, with the author. We can share that with others, enhance it, understand it better, in the context of working with other people, but it is not necessarily required. What is needed, however, is a context in which the relationship can develop—whatever we are reading or studying. So, as it is with people, in learning, there is a relationship between us and the subject matter, and that relationship has its own characteristics—it can be boring, passionate, fiery, hot and cold, fickle—kind of like any relationship. My goal is to help students foster a positive relationship with the subject matter. Sometimes, in the classroom, I think the subject matter is presented in such a sterile surrounding that the students can barely develop the relationship—it's like observing from afar and not really having a chance to meet.

Karen Springer

Activating Prior Knowledge 2.4

The round-robin reading I could definitely relate to. I could remember exactly back to my 9th grade Global Studies class. Exactly what we did in our content area literacy class as an activity happened to me. The teacher was going to teach the next unit on a country, and she passed out the encyclopedia and had us read this section as a class. She picked on almost everyone and I was so nervous because I didn't know if I would be chosen next or how the words should be pronounced. I figured this was going on with the rest of the students as well. In the end we learned nothing. The whole activity was a waste of time because everyone was so preoccupied either worrying or trying to pre-read the next section. As a teacher I will never use this because I think it's not a viable activity to implement in the classroom at any grade level.

Anonymous

I can remember a time in 6th grade when we were told to do just that: take out the text, open to a certain chapter, and take turns reading. At that point in time, we were already considered the worst class that our teacher ever had. She told us that we were unruly. Her worst mistake was putting me and five of my very good friends at the same table. Well, Gabe wasn't the best of all readers, so we knew we were in for it.

We had been learning about the Spanish taking over South America or something to that effect, and when we had gotten to the part about guerrilla warfare, Gabe had seriously botched up one of the words. Our entire table started laughing so hard that Ashley fell out of her chair and onto the floor. Needless to say, we didn't learn much during that lesson.

Judith Koscinski

Reading aloud in class was never a problem for me. I've always been an able and confident reader. However, when the class spent long periods reading aloud, I often read so far ahead that I finished long before the teacher. Also, looking at the pictures very carefully and examining the details of the art left me lost in the readings. Having the class read aloud all period was an inefficient way to learn; it was very difficult to concentrate when other people were reading; the different voices made it annoying to my mind.

Ryan Fagan

Free Responses

Response 1

One of the things that definitely made me smile and say, “Yep, that was me” was when Chris Crutcher was talking about his *Scarlet Letter* test in ninth grade. It made me think back and realize that that was me. I really didn’t enjoy the book. I can remember that for each chapter we had a certain number of questions that we had to answer and then we had to write in a journal on an assigned topic after each chapter. These different things made me dread each night when I would have to sit down and read. Thinking back to the book now, I can’t remember anything about it that would make it seem like I actually read it. Like most students at the time (and today), I got through the book with the help of Cliffs Notes. That was the case with many of the books I was assigned to read. I also agree with Tamara when she says that books in high school are usually ruined by the mundane activities/papers that have to be written about them. If you want to get students involved in reading, this isn’t the way to do it. By assigning intricate tasks for each chapter, the joy in the reading is taken away.

It’s a known fact that many people don’t read. I think one of the questions that needs to be asked is whether people don’t read because they don’t want to, or don’t read because they don’t have the time. Many people lead very busy lives in today’s society. I know that, if I had more time to read, I would read more. There is just not enough time for me to get everything done that I need to get done and have the time to read, relax, etc. I know that during high school I was involved in numerous activities and sports. I barely had enough time to get my homework done, let alone read for pleasure. I think that’s one of the problems teens are faced with today. So much pressure is placed on them that they feel they have to spend all their time on schoolwork. They don’t think that doing reading for fun would be something that should fit into their schedules even if it actually could be.

I think that allowing students to investigate what interests them is something that may shape what they will become in the future. I know that my fascination with storms and natural disasters made me interested in the science concentrations and made me explore other areas of science, leading to my concentration in biology. Holding students back from what they love or are interested in may in the long run hold them back from something they may have loved to do with their lives.

Sara Pooler

Response 2

I really enjoyed the insight on the many different practices of teaching that could help students learn better. One of the main points I received from this section was that student choice is a high priority in getting them to start loving books. You can’t just supply them with one text, having them all read the same thing. It’s the same idea as students with different learning abilities and styles; all students won’t necessarily like the same book. In achieving this goal, you must have an extensive library of books that cover the same subject but from different perspectives.

Another point as well, we don't need to copy how teachers taught us when we were in school. For example, we don't need worksheets that don't serve any purpose. Instead, group students into heterogeneous groups and let them discuss the book. Everyone will learn that each person will probably come up with a different interpretation because all these students will apply what they have experienced in life already and try to relate the book to that. It's another great way to get students to learn to work with others and learn from others as well.

The round-robin activity I could definitely relate to. I could remember exactly back to my ninth grade global studies class. The teacher was going to teach the next unit on a country and she passed out the books and had us read this section as a class. The whole activity was a waste of time because everyone was so preoccupied either worrying or trying to pre-read the next section. As a teacher I will never use this because I think it's not a viable activity to implement into the classroom for any grade level. Instead, do some research into the diversity of your class, and then choose appropriate pieces of literature that would fit their level of ability. I loved the section on "interest inventories." I have always wished one of my teachers had used a type of pre-assessment while I was in school to understand better my strengths and weaknesses. I plan on using this type of pre-assessment so I can get a better understanding of where exactly students stand and who they are as persons.

Another suggestion I was intrigued by was that of "listening questions." The simple task of asking a simple question (or several questions) at the beginning of each lesson may in turn help them ask more questions related to the main one and spark discussions between students.

Anticipation guides coinciding to any work of literature are excellent ways to get students thinking. The activity we did in class was unbelievable. I couldn't believe how much thought could be started and how easily each of us was beginning to be extremely interested in the books that went with the anticipation guide. We all wanted to open that book right away to see what the author had to say. I could see this type of activity being fully accepted in any situation that involves introducing a book.

Yet one more activity that I think would be a great opportunity to fully develop any student's potential in helping them love or like my subject more than they did when they first started in the beginning of the year and become more a part of the learning experience would be the use of "literary field trips." The experience I had personally in our class made me see how fun, easy and interesting this type of activity can be for the whole class. I would definitely use *The National Civil Rights Museum Celebrates Everyday People*, by Alice Faye Duncan, in my class. I even went online and ordered a copy of it and plan to buy a set so I can use it in my classroom later on. I never knew there was a book like this. Do you know any more books like this that focus on different periods of history? It did so many things for me; I felt I was right there at the museum; it gave me a sense of what it was like during the 1960s; it made everything come to life. I can't imagine the outcome and effect this activity would have on my future students.

Frederick Kruger

Response 3

Who is to say what students will and won't find interesting? Plenty of students may find ancient times more interesting than modern times! I felt before student teaching, and I still

feel while I am student teaching, that it is part of the teacher's job to try to motivate the students to be interested in what they are learning. If teachers look bored or unenthused by their own topic, the students will pick up on that and become uninterested as well. It is extremely discouraging to know your own teacher doesn't care about what he or she is teaching you.

I liked the section entitled "Fictional Characters Can Be Passionate Learners" and I want to add that they can be passionate teachers as well. My seventh graders, the students I am with right now, have a wealth of literature available to them, shelved by genre. My cooperating teacher has a shelf for historical fiction, and ones for poetry, fantasy, contemporary fiction, action, etc. Among these novels are the famous *Dear America* and *My Name is America* books. The students absolutely love these fictional diaries based on true events. I came into this student teaching assignment at the tail end of their historical fiction project. The students designed postcards to send to someone they know, explaining why the person would like the book. Many were using the *Dear America* books. The students gained so much knowledge about events such as the Civil War, Trail of Tears, Pearl Harbor, etc., and I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that they were able to connect with the characters and not be faced with a dry history text.

I have found that the way a classroom is situated and decorated is very important to the learning environment. My current cooperating teacher has the classroom set up so that the students sit in small groups of four to six people. There is plenty of space for the teacher to move around the classroom, and there are posters, pictures, quilts, quotations, and plants all over the room. She writes assignments in different colored pens and the room, on the whole, has a very warm, comfortable feeling to it. I think the classroom setup shows the teacher cares about her class and the subject.

I want to include that fostering content literacy through teacher reading is very important in my opinion. It saddens me to think that so many students have either no idea that their teachers read or they think/know their teachers do not like reading. Sometimes, as with the activity on personification I made up for my seventh grade class, I will do the activity with them and share what I have written. This shows that teachers find what they teach to be useful and purposeful. The school I am student teaching in has built-in reading time for the entire school every day for twenty minutes. It doesn't matter if the students are in science class; they must read a book of their choice for twenty minutes. When my students do this, I read with them. I want them to see this is a useful time and that teachers take advantage of the opportunity to read.

Literature circles are something I plan to use as much as possible when I have my own classroom. I think students appreciate it and the more relaxed atmosphere. The student leadership and control and open discussion format serve great literature more than asking fifty questions about the text.

All in all, I think a lot can be done to make students more active, interested readers. Some methods, I'm learning, don't necessarily reach everyone all the time, but there are always new methods of motivation to try.

Michele Boorum



For other reader responses to, and work created based on, Chapter 2, please visit the Kane Resource Site, at www.hhpcommunities.com/kane

Instructional Strategy

The following strategy is from Sharon Kane's [*Integrating Literature in the Content Areas: Enhancing Adolescent Learning and Literacy*](#) (Holcomb Hathaway, 2008). This will help show your students how to create their own literary field trip for their classes.

LITERARY FIELD TRIP

Standards Addressed

Art: Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making.

English/Language Arts: Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information . . . and for personal fulfillment.

Context/Rationale

You probably can't take your students on too many field trips—you'll be constrained by geography, time, and finances. But you can go anywhere in place or time with the help of literature, primary documents, and a strategy I call *literary field trips*. Following are guidelines for preparing a literary field trip for a content area.

Procedure (Kane, 2011)

- Choose a place or location relevant to a content area lesson you are preparing.
- Select book(s), websites, and/or other materials relevant to the lesson; for example:

The Big "M" by C. Rothman (2002) (art)

The Young Person's Guide to the Opera by A. Ganeri and N. Barber (2001) (music)

Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives edited by C. Compston and R. F. Seidman (2004) (social studies)

- Together with your students, brainstorm what they might expect to find on the tour.
- Divide students into groups and have them prepare questions for their "tour guide."
- Have the groups "tour" the location by reading and visiting the Internet sites.
- Ask students to prepare a summary of tour highlights, telling what they learned about the location and its related content area subject.
- Have students plot their journeys on a map and/or timeline.
- Discuss where the students' inquiry can go from here, and what other resources they might "tour" next to learn about the topic in more depth and answer any remaining or new questions.

Walk-Through

Mr. Lassec wants his art students to get to know famous artists as real people, people with families, flaws, personalities, and friends and enemies, as well as with varying styles and artistic processes. So he takes them on literary field trips to places where artists lived and worked. We join him now as he guides his students on a tour of Susan Goldman Rubin's *The Yellow House: Vincent van Gogh & Paul Gauguin Side by Side* (2001).

Mr. Lassec: We're going across the ocean today to visit a yellow house. It's in the south of France, in Arles. For nine weeks, this house was shared by two geniuses of the art world, Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh. From your background knowledge about either or both of these artists, tell me what you'll expect to find:

Patrice: Paintings of sunflowers and starry nights drying on easels.

Anna Elizabeth: Probably some discussion at night about what they've been painting that day.

Craig: An ear on the floor!

Mr. Lassec: Actually, Craig, you'll find that the ear does come off during these nine weeks. I'll bet that makes you anxious to get started on this tour! But, before we go, I want you to formulate some questions you might ask the two artists who will be our hosts. Mohammed, will you please record our questions on our chart paper up here at the easel?

Sylvia: I'd like to know if they liked each other's works, if they inspired each other, and maybe was there any jealousy between them?

Richard: I wonder how their ways of going about getting ideas and then actually painting were different from each other.

Mr. Lassec: Those are good questions to ask these men. Let's go; I think the sun should be setting when we arrive and they can tell us about their day. Jot down some interesting things you learn from them, and write at least one new question that has entered your mind as a result of your visit. And for those of you who didn't get as many details as you wanted from this short picture book, I recommend *The Yellow House: Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Nine Turbulent Weeks in Arles*, by Martin Gayford (2006). This book won't just be a quick class field trip; you'll live with the artists for a while! I loved it.

Kane, S. (2008). *Integrating literature in the content areas: Enhancing adolescent learning and literacy*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway, Publishers.