



Oh, the Journeys We Will Take through Close Reading Fiction

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Elementary students, particularly in grades 4 and 5, English Language Arts

Keywords: close reading, Kate DiCamillo, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Flora & Ulysses*, *the Illuminated Adventures*, *The Magician's Elephant*

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix I](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Close reading is the practice of reading a text multiple times to dig deeper into the text and to find the different layers of meaning. Close reading analyzes the author's craft by asking the reader to pay close attention to vocabulary, sentence structure, and sometimes, illustrations. The curriculum unit explores close reading using three books by Kate DiCamillo. The students will learn how to close read through a variety of activities. These activities include playing with vocabulary and its affect on the meaning of a sentence, participating in a reader's theater, making trading cards for characters, and creating a life-size interpretation of the book for other students to journey through and experience. These activities are intended to encourage and reinforce skills that will help students better comprehend what they read by having students read certain texts and passages more than once.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 75 students in 5th grade through the collaboration of media and language arts.

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Elizabeth Smiley

Introduction

Each new school year is the start of a new journey. As the media specialist, I know most of the students having taught them in the past, but regardless it is a new beginning. It is this new beginning that affords me the opportunity to take the students on a new journey each year as we explore the books in the media center. As I began with the usual media center orientation, I ended by telling each class that our focus this year was going to be the famous Dr. Seuss quotation "oh, the places you'll go." In the library we do not need to leave to go on a journey; we will do it through the books we read and the technology we use. I want each student to experience a journey as they read and explore. It was with this saying that I developed the idea for my unit. Every book has the capacity to transport us somewhere else or allow us to experience something we could not do otherwise. Through close reading we will go deeper into the text, to explore not only the story and the elements of a story, but also the author's craft and how the author cunningly uses it to take the reader on a journey.

Background

The school I work at is in the town Huntersville, a bedroom community of Charlotte and part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. This year the school celebrates its tenth anniversary and it is my ninth year as its media specialist. Over the past nine years, I have worked primarily with students and my schedule has always been fixed, until this year. Our school has been on its own journey over the years, after beginning its first year over capacity. As the school population grew steadily each year, I continued to work in isolation to teach students information skills and impart a love of reading and learning. Yet ideally my role in the school would be one in which I collaborate with teachers to make lesson plans that would incorporate my goals of information skills as the vehicle for their content. This year, I have been given this opportunity with a new schedule that alternates from a fixed schedule on A week to a flexible schedule on B week. Our student population decreased when another school was built to relieve the overcrowding. As a result of having a small student body, we also lost staff. I saw this as an opportunity to transform my role in the school to encompass technology. I believe that technology does play an important role in our lives and it is our duty to teach students how to use it effectively. Therefore, I have focused my own professional development on learning more about technology and it is this knowledge that now affords me the opportunity to play a pivotal role with students and teachers as we navigate this ever-changing landscape.

Our current student population is 478 students. Our students are from middle class working families that live in the surrounding neighborhoods and subdivisions. We are fortunate to have few, if any, behavior problems and therefore, can focus on academics. We have a very active PTA that supports our teachers and students, as well as parent involvement in the classroom. This parent support has allowed me to focus my attention on students and teaching, instead of on the job of shelving books which can be a monumental task for one person. The school demographics are as follows:

- 75% White
- 14% African-American
- 6% Hispanic
- 2% Asian
- 2 % American Indian

Other statistics:

- 19% economically disadvantaged
- 9% have identified learning disabilities
- 7% academically gifted
- 4% limited English proficient

Our district has adopted the balanced literacy program that incorporates the following four components: supported reading, independent reading, word study and writing. I wrote my curriculum unit with these components in mind. I want to reinforce what students are being taught in their classrooms as I teach them how to close read.

Rationale

My goal for this unit is to take students on a literary journey. Unlike most people, I had the unbelievable luck to grow up overseas which was quite the adventure. When we lived in Jordan, there was a Bedouin family who lived across the street in a tent. That isn't something that most people see in their lifetime. Our school week was Sunday through Thursday because of the Muslim holy days. We were constantly serenaded by the imams singing the holy prayers from the mosque five times a day. This was a miraculous journey for me.

I have struggled with the sadness of knowing that not everyone has these journeys or experiences these marvels of the senses. But with my love of reading, I have found a way for others to experience these amazing places through journeys in literature. In this unit, we will take it one step further by examining the text even deeper with close reading. We will look for meaning in all the elements of fiction from characters and setting to plot and conflict. We will continually think about the author's choice of vocabulary and whether different aspects of the novel are meaningful and symbolic. As I have attended each

seminar meeting and we have discussed different novels, I realize that nothing is accidental when it comes to an author's writing.

Our journey will begin with reading a novel by Kate DiCamillo. I have selected three novels to use in this curriculum unit: *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Flora & Ulysses, an Illuminated Adventure*, and *The Magician's Elephant*. I selected three books because we only have three fifth grade classes. I will read a different novel with each class. We will delve into it with close reading and other activities. Then, we will culminate with a group-wide activity to wrap up the unit: a celebration at the end of our journey. I want this unit to allow students to realize that their lives are a journey. I want them to marvel at what they see around them and appreciate life and all its moments, both good and bad.

Finally, I want to include technology into the unit as it is ever-present in our lives and has helped to make us a more globally connected community. Students need to learn how to use technology ethically, safely and wisely when in pursuit of learning. The media center received a cart of thirty Chromebooks. Given this new technology at my disposal, I want to include time-tested activities with a technological twist that will have students creating innovative products. Part of my journey will be a transformation from librarian to a true *media* specialist. This year the administration is adapting my role to include technology facilitator and my schedule rotates every four days from a fixed schedule to a flexible schedule. The flexible schedule allows me the time to transform the way we use technology at our school. Technology is integral in allowing us to journey to places we might not have ever imagined and have adventures that we could never have imagined before.

Close Reading

Our seminar has focused on close reading: on the examination of the text, any accompanying illustrations, and the meaning that words create on the page. When I read the seminar books over the summer, I read them as I would read for pleasure and I found that I did not like them very well. I was not impressed with the selections. Little did I know that my opinions would change drastically and I would get emotionally involved in each book and each short story. When we discussed each book during our weekly seminar meetings I was amazed by the ingeniousness of each author, the careful use of vocabulary, the intentional structure of sentences, and the use of illustrations to drive the story with the text. It was magical and the authors were the magicians. It was this journey through their novels that gave me an appreciation for the novel and the author, one I did not have before the seminar. I want students to witness real magic: authors using their craft in artful, magical ways to engage and delight readers on a journey through their story. This can only be accomplished with close reading.

“Close, analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole.”ⁱ

Close reading is thinking as you read and reread, particularly about your purpose for reading and the author's purpose for writing the piece. Paul and Elder (2006) recommend asking the following questions as one reads:

- Can I summarize the meaning of this text in my own words?
- Can I give examples from my own experience of what the text is saying?
- Can I generate metaphors and diagrams to illustrate what the text is saying?
- What is clear to me and what do I need clarified?
- Can I connect core ideas in this text to other core ideas I understand?

These questions may not be appropriate for elementary school students, where some argue the instruction in close reading should begin, and therefore Nancy Boyles (2012) recommends the following questions:

- What is the author telling me here?
- Are there any hard or important words?
- What does the author want me to understand?
- How does the author play with language to add to meaning?

Students will be asked to think about these questions in the subsequent activities that we do with each book we read. As a media specialist, I like to use bookmarks with students. I will make them with the important information that I want students to know and it also promotes proper book care. There is a bookmark with these questions in Appendix II.

Slow Reading

Another idea that I came across while I was researching close reading was slow reading. Slow reading is exactly what it sounds like: the process of reading slowly to understand to a deeper degree. This can particularly benefit students because it encourages them to slow down and think about what they are reading. Too often we emphasize speed and fluency, but that can be at the expense of comprehension. Teaching students about slow reading will also help them during End-of-Grade testing when students are required to read several lengthy passages. If they are taught the benefits of slow reading and close reading they will be better prepared for EOG testing.

The rules of slow reading come from the book *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* by David Mikics. He was not the first to coin the term slow reading, but he does explain it and its rules in this book. This was my first time coming across this term and given the frantic atmosphere and pace of life, I considered it important to teach to students. The best environment for slow reading would be one with no disruptions or interruptions from the outside world; therefore, Mikics recommends that instructors silence all technology when students are engaged in slow reading. The book lays out fourteen rules to slow reading, but I have chosen to eliminate some and condense others so that students are only focused on five at this point. The first rule is to be patient. Students must be reminded to be patient. Everything in our daily life tells us to move quickly, so students will need constant reminders to slow down. The next rule is to ask the right questions. I will refer students to the questions recommended by Nancy Boyer earlier in the section about close reading. This is important because we want students to understand the differences between questions. Not all questions are created equal; some questions are basic recalling of events while others require critical thinking. Another important rule of slow reading is to notice beginnings and endings and to identify signposts throughout the text. Another rule is to use the dictionary when necessary. Finally, write it down: students need to learn to write down their thoughts as they read. Balanced literacy encourages students to use sticky notes to write down their thoughts, so we will continue with this practice. In order to remind students of the rules, I have a bookmark for them to refer to while they read. See Appendix II for the bookmark.

Strategies

Read-aloud

I have chosen to read the novel aloud to each class because I want to model how to read it with intention. Reading the books aloud gives students the advantage of allowing them to focus their attention on the story, the characters, and allowing them to envision it all in their minds. The novels I have chosen are not too long, so I hope to finish each during my four day flex week. I will read each day for an hour. This may be difficult to justify when we are told to have students engaged in our lessons. I think it can be argued that this is time well spent. Many of these students will want to read more books by this author. If a teacher is concerned about reading aloud too long, then I would recommend choosing shorter books. However, reading aloud is still appropriate when it motivates students to read. The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease recommends the following tips:

- The first time you read, discuss the illustration on the cover. Ask, “What do you think this is going to be about?” and because we are examining the author’s intention, “Why did the author choose this illustration for the cover?”
- As you read, keep listeners involved by occasionally asking students to predict what will happen next. This will keep them engaged in the book to see if their predictions are accurate.

- Find suspenseful spots at which to stop. This will leave the students wanting to hear more.
- Allow listeners a few minutes to settle down and adjust themselves. I will have students sitting in BackJack chairs because they are more comfortable than sitting on the story carpet. If you are reading for extended periods of time, it is important that students are comfortable so that they can focus on the book. Another recommendation that will limit distractions is to dim the lights so that other students do not become a distraction.
- Reading aloud can be difficult so practicing is important, especially when trying to include appropriate expression, intonation, and pacing. Remember to read slowly to allow the listener time to visualize the characters and create mental pictures.

Discussion

Discussion is an important component for internalizing the book; therefore, I recommend a short discussion time at the beginning and end of each reading session. The discussion should vary from whole class participation to talking with partners to small group discussions, because the groupings ensure that most students will engage in the discussions. If an instructor offers only whole group discussion, shy students, students with learning disabilities or students who lack academic confidence will not participate fully. It is important that the discussions occur amongst peers instead of always being teacher-lead. In order to facilitate discussions, here are a few rules that students should follow: students should be seated so that they are able to address each other, students need to keep eye contact with the speaker and show body language consistent with an engaged listener (such as leaning in or nodding), and the teacher should not be the primary speaker. Also, and this goes against most teachers' comfort levels, students should not have to raise their hands. The discussion should sound like a conversation (Gritter).

Another point that Jim Trelease makes is that when we are excited about a good book or a good movie, we talk about it. We need to allow students time to talk about what we are reading and what they are reading. He noted that Oprah's very successful book club utilized hundreds of thousands of discussion groups rather than writing assignments. He suggests eliminating most of the writing students are required to do when they read. With this in mind, I have not included any writing activities. Our focus is on close reading.

Another helpful resource is the activity guides and discussion guides from Candlewick Press, the publishing company of most of Kate DiCamillo's books. These guides include many activities and discussion questions. I have found that many publishing companies have guides or lesson plans for teachers to use when reading their books.

Interactive Read-aloud

According to Fountas and Pinnell, Interactive Read-Aloud is “A teaching context in which students are actively listening and responding to an oral reading of a text.” This allows the teacher to model fluency and model thinking out loud. Students see the teacher stop and reflect while reading. The teacher has pre selected the questions to ask students during the read aloud. These are typically on a sticky note in the book and students are then asked to turn and talk at different points in the book to keep them engaged in the text. As I read each novel in preparation for the unit, I placed sticky notes throughout along with questions and notes that I wanted to share with students during the read aloud.

Activities

Lesson One: The Kickoff

The kickoff activity is a scavenger hunt of objects from the novels. I chose this activity because it sets the unit off with the students engaged in a journey to find the clues. It also allows them to practice an important skill which is locating books in the media center. Scavenger Hunt- Students will use the online card catalog to find the books that the riddles describe. If they are correct, they will find their next clue in the book. The last book has an envelope containing an invitation to hear the book read aloud.

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Clue 1: Find a biography of Beatrix Potter. What animal was featured prominently in her stories? (Answer: rabbits)

- Students should go to the biography section and look for the call number B POT to find a book about Beatrix Potter. Then, after looking through the book they will see that rabbits were featured prominently in her stories. If students need help, remind them of a certain character named Peter.
- Students should go to the computer to search the online card catalog and look up the call number for rabbits. The next clue will be in one of the books found in 599.32.

Clue 2: Before air travel this would have been the way to cross the Atlantic Ocean. (Answer: ships)

- Students should search the online card catalog to find ships, in particular the book *The Great Ships* in 387.2 OBR.

Clue 3: These are used by farmers to scare away birds that might eat their crops. (Answer: scarecrows)

- The book students are looking for is *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant, call number E RYL.

Clue 4: This place is a small, informal, and usually inexpensive restaurant. There is typically a counter and stools where people sit to eat and maybe a few booths. (Answer: diner) Hint: these places sometimes look like shiny train cars

- The book that has the clue is *Minnie's Diner: a multiplying menu* by Dayle Ann Dodds, call number E DOD

Clue 5: Dolls, stuffed animals, games, balls...what do we call them and where did they come from? This book will at the stories behind these items we hold so dear. (Answer: toys)

- This book holds the invitation to the read-aloud, *Toys! : Amazing stories behind some great inventions* by Don Wulffson, call number 688.7 WUL.

Congratulations! You are now invited to attend the Read-Aloud of a book that contains an element from each clue, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo!

Flora & Ulysses, the Illuminated Adventures

Clue 1: This nut-eating rodent is often considered a nuisance. (Answer: squirrels)

- Using the online catalog, students will find the call number for books about squirrels, 599.36, to locate the next clue.

Clue 2: This mother wrote many rhymes for children, including one with a little girl who is followed by a lamb. (Answer: Mother Goose)

- Mother Goose- call number 398.8. The next clue will be on the page with "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Clue 3: This machine is the precursor to the computer. Click, click! Find a book that features this tool prominently. (Answer: typewriter)

- Student should search for typewriter and find the book *Click, clack, moo: cows that type* by Doreen Cronin, call number E CRO.

Clue 4: People that are visually impaired use this to read. Find a book about pen pals and a little girl that learns how to use this machine to write secret messages to her pen pal. (Answer: Braille)

- *Private and confidential: a story about braille* by Marion Ripley, call number E RIP.

Clue 5: Not your average, ordinary human beings, these people have powers and abilities that they can use for good or evil. (Answer: superheroes)

- *Superhero ABC* by Bob McLeod, call number E MCL
- Inside students will find their reward, an invitation to hear the book *Flora & Ulysses, The Illuminated Adventures* by Kate DiCamillo

The final book contains the invitation to hear the book.

The Magician's Elephant

Clue 1: These children have lost their parents. Find a book with children affected by this loss during WWII. (Answer: orphans)

- *The orphans of Normandy : a true story of World War II told through drawings by children* by Nancy Amis, call number 940.54 AMI

Clue 2: I have a trunk but I am not traveling anywhere. Find a book to learn more about me. (Answer: elephant)

- *Elephants-* 599.67

Clue 3: This popular series is about siblings who adventure back in time. Find the book with magic in the title and you will find the next clue.

- *Moonlight on the Magic Flute* by Mary Pope Osborne, call number F OSB

Clue 4: Want to know what your future holds? This person holds the key and the next clue. (Answer: fortune teller)

- *The Fortune-Tellers* by Lloyd Alexander, E ALE

Clue 5: Abracadabra! Hocus Pocus! Here is something that will amaze the audience...The Escaping Coin. (Answer: Magic)

- *Magic tricks* by Cynthia Klingel, 793.8 KLI

Students will find a ticket inside the book inviting them to listen to *The Magician's Elephant*.

Lesson Two: Supported reading- The Interactive Read-Aloud

Close Read of Chapter One from The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Chapter one is important because this is when we are introduced to Edward. The author has chosen very specific language to convey how Edward feels about himself. On page six I would read the second paragraph several times. The first reading of the paragraph is to get the main idea. On the second reading, I will ask students to identify important vocabulary. What words give us the best picture of Edward's character? Students might pick out words like exceptional, elegant, unsavory, and unpleasant. Then, we will discuss what happens if we change those words and how it would affect the meaning and impact of the sentence. On the third reading I will have students think about what inferences we can make about Edward in this paragraph.

Next, on page seven we learn about Edward's extensive wardrobe and the first paragraph is worth reading more than once because the author goes through a detailed list of his wardrobe. Again we would go through the paragraph and pull out significant vocabulary. On the next reading students would think about the implications of such possessions. For example, the gold pocket watch has to be wound each day telling us that it is a working watch and not a child's toy.

In this chapter we are introduced to the reoccurring symbolism of the stars. As Abilene is putting her beloved Edward to bed, we learn that when placed on his side that he stares at the stars and finds it comforting. One might imagine how lonely it gets at night when everyone is asleep, and yet Edward does not have the luxury of closing his eyes. The stars are his companion and with each new owner they will be the only constant in his ever-changing life. They will represent companionship, friendship and hope.

Close Read of Chapter ten from the book Flora & Ulysses, the Illuminated Adventures

As we close read the chapter we will learn about Flora's relationship with her mother. Repeating sentences and paragraphs helps students think about the words and the sentences and the effects they have in the book. For example, I would repeat the following line: "She wrote on an old typewriter, and when she pounded the keys, the kitchen table shook and the plates on the shelves rattled and the silverware in the drawers cried out in a metallic kind of alarm." It is a powerful sentence that creates a picture of what it sounded like when she typed and how it created such a ruckus. This is important because it gives the reader insight into her mother and the effect that she has on Flora's life. Flora thinks her mother is one reason her parents divorced so every time she hears her mother at the typewriter she is reminded of the divorce. It is also ironic that her mother writes romance novels. Flora clearly blames her mother for the divorce and hates her mother for it and hates anything associated with her mother. In paragraph seven we learn that her mother sucks on lollipops and they make her sound funny when she talks. This is just one more thing that Flora finds annoying about her mother. The author intentionally gave her mother many annoying characteristics in order to make us understand and feel sympathetic toward Flora.

On page 29 there is an illustration of the scene. I will ask students to point out what they notice about the illustration. Students might point out that her mother has her back to Flora and seems very engrossed in what she is typing. Flora is holding the squirrel because she knows that her mother is more worried about the writing and so she won't stop what she is doing to turn around and talk to her daughter. We also get a clear view of Mary Ann, the lamp her mother treasures. It is the first thing people see when they come in so clearly it must be important if it holds a place of such prominence in the house.

In paragraph fourteen we learn that Flora hates her mother's shepherdess lamp because it seems that her mother cares more about the lamp than she does about Flora. Her mother even says she loves it with all heart when it arrives from London and she gives the lamp a name. Flora probably feels second best. Another paragraph that I will repeat is paragraph seventeen. "Flora's mother never called Flora beautiful. She never said that she loved *her* with all her heart. Luckily, Flora was a cynic and didn't care whether her mother loved her or not." We can see here that Flora does care despite what she says because she has kept account of the fact that her mother has never said she was beautiful. If she did not care she would not bring it up.

Close Reading of Chapter four in The Magician's Elephant

Chapter four opens describing the winter, the winter of the elephant and one perfect, precise sentence explains it all. "Darkness prevailed." Darkness represent the state of affairs for Peter who learns that his sister is alive, the magician whose magic altered the life of Madame LaVaughn and the elephant, Adele who is living in an orphanage, Madame LaVaughn who is now consigned to life in a wheelchair, and an elephant who does not know where she is but knows it is not home. The outlook for all the characters is bleak. The author is speaking both literally and figuratively. Peter is being lied to about his sister from the person that is supposed to be caring for him, Vilna Lutz.

On page forty-four Madame LaVaughn is visiting the magician in the prison and there is an illustration on the opposite page. It is important to note that when looking at the picture, it is Madame LaVaughn that looks to be behind bars. We know that the magician is in prison, but this illustration demonstrates that she is now locked in her own prison, the wheelchair, and is unable to walk. Another important point is that both the magician and Madame LaVaughn keep repeating the same thing over and over again, emphasizing how they are trapped by their circumstances.

On page fifty-one, I will reread the first and second paragraph to the class, in particular the line that reads, "Looking out over the city, Peter decided that it was a terrible and complicated thing to hope, and that it might be easier, instead, to despair." He is losing hope and the chapter ends with this line, "The longer he marched, the more convinced Peter became that things were indeed hopeless and that an elephant was a ridiculous answer to any question- but a particularly ridiculous answer to a question posed by the human heart." I will ask students to think about the author's choice of having an elephant come through the opera house and how the elephant is the answer to finding his sister. Could the author be using the idiom, an elephant in the room which basically means that there is obviously a problem that people are trying to ignore?

Lesson Three

Reader's Theater

Reader's theater is a way to engage students in reading books or excerpts from books. Students are given scripts and they do an informal reading of the script. It is important to prepare students with a mini lesson about reading scripts if they have not ever read a script or done a reader's theater before.

- Scripts
 - Characters/Roles- highlight the roles for each character on their script. This makes it easier for students to follow their part.
 - Setting- discuss where it takes place because that might affect how they perform.
 - Stage directions- are in parenthesis and are not said aloud. They guide how the line should be said or they guide the actions of the character.
 - Perform- read clearly, enunciate the words, and pay attention to where we are in the script so you do not get lost.
 - If possible create the script using a Google doc and then students can use a mobile device to access the scripts. This is a simple way to incorporate technology and be environmentally friendly.

I have found that students love to perform in front of their peers, especially in fifth grade. However, to ensure a successful reading, students will need time to read through the script and practice before getting in front of the class. I might also recommend using an iPad to record the performance. This activity might take two periods, the first to practice and the second to perform and record.

I found reader's theater scripts for Chapter twenty-two of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* adapted by Judy Freeman and a script for chapter one of *Flora & Ulysses*. When I did not find one for *The Magician's Elephant*, I created one for Chapter three.

Lesson Four: Vocabulary

The vocabulary plays an important role in the novel, and it also plays an important role in a balanced literacy program and in close reading. Authors carefully and painstakingly select the perfect, precise word to convey an idea or an image. It is with this in mind that we will play with the author's words. Students will not only define the vocabulary, but they will look for synonyms in a thesaurus, and finally they will substitute vocabulary to see the effect it has on the sentence. My objective is for students to see the importance of word choice and eventually for it affect their own writing.

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Kate DiCamillo is so deliberate with her word choice because she needs to convey to the reader the type of character that Edward is throughout the story. He goes through an

amazing transformation and it is only possible to see that transformation through her choice of words.

agitation	cavalier	condescending	demented
diligence	elegant	ennui	exceptional
implication	indignity	inexplicable	insistent
mortified	singular	excruciatingly	vigorously
obliged	resonate	triumphant	unsavory

Flora & Ulysses: An Illuminated Adventure

This book is full of rich vocabulary. The author repeats certain vocabulary which emphasizes its importance throughout the book. Below are the words that I want my students to write down and define. As we revisit the text to close read, students are encouraged to write down vocabulary of their own. As discussed earlier in slow reading, it is important that students use the dictionary when they come across words they do not know. This is a strategy that I want to encourage with students.

illuminated	malfeasance	cynic	cogitation
incandescent	unassuming	vanquishing	treacherous
cryptic	positing	stench	obfuscate
surreptitious	junctions	hysteria	capacious
banished	depleted	literal/figurative*	hyperbole*
foreboding*	euphemistically	genres**	symbolism*

*It is important to point out to students that some of these words are literary terms. These were very deliberate choices by Kate DiCamillo because Flora’s mother is a writer and Flora herself is very wrapped up in the mechanics of comic books.

**Although the author does not use the word genre in the book, she does touch on several genres; therefore, I think this will be a good time review different genres. Flora’s mother writes romance novels, Flora reads graphic novels or comic books, Ulysses writes poetry, and Dr. Meescham tells fairy tales about her childhood in Blundermeecen.

The Magician’s Elephant

Kate DiCamillo again uses language to mesmerize the reader with the haunting stories of Peter Augustus Duchene, Leo and Gloria Matienne, Adele, and the elephant. Each of the

characters is affected by circumstances out of their control and yet together they overcome impossible odds to ensure that everyone ends up where they belong: home.

audacity	austere	cataclysmic	cavernous
edification	excruciating	hilarity	hindrance
improbable	inadvertently	indifferent	inexplicable
irrevocably	pertinent	inhabitants	irrefutable
reciprocal	subordinate	transparent	treachery

Using dictionaries and thesauruses in the media center, students will complete a chart with the following information: vocabulary word, definition, example from the book, synonyms, and example substituting the vocabulary word with the synonym. When the class is finished working individually or in small groups, we will discuss the words and the changes they notice when words are replaced in specific sentences. Students will see the importance in taking great pains to choose the most appropriate word to convey an idea.

Lesson Five: Character Analysis

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

A fun activity for students is making trading cards for specific characters using the Trading Card Creator from the ReadWriteThink website. Since this is the first time we will be using this website I will model how to create one with their help. Then, letting them work with a partner, they will pick their character out of jar.

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Abilene	Pellegrina	Lawrence	Nellie
Lolly	Bull	Bryce	Sarah Ruth
Edward	Susanna	Malone	Jangles

Flora & Ulysses the Illuminated Adventures

Flora	Tootie	George	Phyllis
Ulysses	William Spiver	Dr. Meescham	Rita

The Magician's Elephant

Peter Duchene	Vilna Lutz	Madame LaVaughn	Leo Matienne
Gloria Matienne	Adele	The elephant	Countess Quintet
Batok Whynn	The Magician	Tomas	Sister Marie

- Using a chromebook or an ipad, the students will go to the trading card website or the app.

- Students are instructed to create a username. I recommend that students use their first name and last initial or if they are working with a partner, they should combine their name. (Ex. MarieJennifer)
- Next, they enter a topic and choose a type of card. Students will type in the character's name for the topic and choose fictional person for the type.
- Elements of the trading card- students will be prompted to answer the following questions about their character.
 1. Description
 - Source- Where do you read about the character?
 - Appearance- What does the character look like?
 - Personality- How does the character act?
 2. Insights
 - Thoughts- What are the characters most important thoughts?
 - Feelings- What are the characters most important feelings?
 3. Development
 - Problem- What is the problem at the beginning of the book?
 - Goal- What does the character want to happen by the end?
 - Outcome- Does the character succeed? What happens as a result?
 4. Memorable Interaction
 - Quote- What memorable thing does the character say?
 - Action- What did the character do that got your attention?
 - Interactions- How does the character get along with others?
 5. Personal Connection
 - Do you like the character? Why or why not?
 - Who does Edward remind you of and why?
 6. Upload a picture to represent the character. Note: Copyright can be an issue. I recommend talking with students about appropriate use of images and copyright. Then, show students sites that offer public domain images.
- Students will share their trading cards using the smart board.

Technology Extension Activity: Glogging

Glogster is a Web 2.0 tool that allows users to create virtual posters combining text, audio, video, images, and hyperlinks and to share them with others electronically. This is a great way to allow students to create a product based on the content they have learned. Each fifth grader has an account that they can use to create an interactive poster. My goal is to have students create at least two glogsters by the end of the year. During this unit I will introduce students to Glogster, give them their account information, and model how to create a glogster.

Step 1: An introduction to Glogster

- expose students to technology that allows them to create products

Step 2: Show them Glogpedia

- A collection of glogsters
- Show students one created about Kate DiCamillo

Step 3: Make a glogster

- Whole class- to model how to do it
- Small groups- if students have already made one
- Individually - for gifted students or high flyers

Culminating Activity: A life-size journey through the novel

As we close read, students will be asked to think about which parts are most important to include in the "journey" through the novel that they will create using butcher paper as panels. Using ten to twelve panels, students will create a life size reproduction of the novel. They will need to decide the most important events in the story.

In small groups, students will paint a scene from the novel we have read. Students will need to choose quotations to include in each scene that they feel best summarizes the scene. Depending on how well the work is going, I might ask students to think of ways that they can incorporate themselves in the scene, thereby creating an installation art piece. Other classes will be invited to walk through the life-size novels and they will be displayed in the halls of the school.

I am allocating a week for the creation of each novel reproduction. I will provide each group with ample space, butcher paper, water colors, pencils and erasers. The first step will be to decide which scenes to include in the reproduction. Then, I will divide the class into small groups to work on a scene. Each small group will have to sketch their ideas on a sheet of paper and explain their ideas to me. Once I have signed off on their sketch, they will be given their panel of paper and the other necessary materials. For added support, I will ask our art teacher to help each group when possible to ensure they are utilizing the entire panel and spacing things correctly on the panel to optimize visual appeal.

Once the panels are in place, students will use an iPad to make an imovie. The movies will be part of the celebration at the end of the unit. The classes will be invited to the media center for a premier screening of the movies.

List of Materials for Classroom Use

Glogster- <http://edu.glogster.com/?ref=com> It is a website that allows students to create interactive posters about any topic. There is also an app available for iPads.

Reader's Theater scripts- *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*
<http://www.edwardtulane.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mMUZUo vpP-E%3d&tabid=77> It is a reader's theater script of Chapter Twenty-two. The scene is

when Edward walks into the house on Egypt Street and is greeted by all his past owners.

Flora & Ulysses the Illuminated Adventures

<http://texasbluebonnetaward2015.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/rtfloraulysses.pdf> The script is from the beginning of the book when Tootie Tinkham accidentally runs over the squirrel and Flora runs over to try and save the creature.

Trading cards- ReadWriteThink

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/trading_cards_2/ It is a website and an app that allows students to create trading cards. It has a template specifically for creating a trading card for book characters, which is good when teaching character analysis.

Appendix I: Implementing Teaching Standards

Common Core and State Standards for English Language Arts in 5th grade

RL 5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. Students will complete this goal when creating the life-size walk through the novel.

RL 5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. Students will complete the standard through discussion of the elements of fiction and as we discuss the novel while we read.

RL 5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). Students will achieve this standard when they create the trading cards for the characters.

RL 5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes. The students will complete the standard through the vocabulary activities and our discussions of close reading and the author's intention.

RL 5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem. Students will accomplish this standard when they create the life-size journey through the novel.

RL 5.7 Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem). Students will complete the standard when we use glogpedia to explore the work of Kate DiCamillo.

Appendix II

Bookmark: Close reading questions...

- What is the author telling me here?
- Are there any hard or important words?
- What does the author want me to understand?
- How does the author play with language to add to meaning?

Bookmark: The Rules of Slow Reading

1. be patient
2. ask the right questions
3. notice beginnings and endings and to identify signposts throughout the text
4. use the dictionary
5. write it down

Bookmark: Vocabulary

- When you come across a word you do not know, **STOP!**
- Look it up in both a dictionary to learn the definition
- Then, find it in a thesaurus to find synonyms of the word

Bookmark: Elements of Fiction

- Characters: Think about Main/Round/Flat/Protagonist/Antagonist
- Setting: when and where does the story take place (look for clues in the story)
- Plot: beginning/middle/end
- Conflict: what is the main problem in the story?
- Resolution: how does the story end?

Bookmark: notes and questions as I read

Page _____: _____

Page _____: _____

Page _____: _____

Reading List for Students

DiCamillo, Kate, and Bagram Ibatoulline. *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2006. The book is about a china rabbit, Edward Tulane, who loves only himself until he is separated from his owner. He travels the country with different owners and it is through the traveling and different owners that he learns to love others.

DiCamillo, Kate, and K. G. Campbell. *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013. The book is about Flora and her relationships with her mother and father, William Spiver, and a squirrel named Ulysses who has superhero powers.

DiCamillo, Kate, and Yoko Tanaka. *The Magician's Elephant*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2009. Peter visits a fortune-teller who tells him startling news about a sister that he is told is dead, as well as the troublesome clue that will lead him to his sister, the elephant.

Bibliography for Teachers

Boyles, Nancy. "Closing in on Close Reading." *Educational Leadership* 70, no. 4 (2012/2013): 36-41. The article explains how to teach close reading.

Burke, Beth A. "Up Close with Close Reading: Strengthening Your Core." *Library Sparks*, November 2013, 16-19. The article looks at close reading with a library perspective which is particularly helpful for media specialists.

"Candlewick Press - Resources." Candlewick Press. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://www.candlewick.com/authill.asp?b=Author&pg=1&m=actlist&a=&id=0&pix=n>. The website contains discussion guides and teacher guides, as well as activity sheets and reproducible sheets that teachers may find useful.

Cole, Jill E. "Motivating Students to Engage in Close Reading." *Illinois Reading Council Journal* 42, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 19-28. The article emphasizes the importance of motivation with all learning and offers six ways to motivate students to close read texts.

Cummins, Sandy. "What Students Can Do When the Reading Get Rough." *Educational Leadership*, November 2013, 69-72. This article offers close reading and specific strategies to help students be successful when reading.

Fisher, Douglas, and Nancy Frey. "Close Reading In Elementary Schools." *The Reading Teacher* 66, no. 3 (2012): 179-88. doi:10.1002/TRTR.01117. The article

defines close reading and gives key features of close reading such as repeated readings, text-dependent questions, and annotation.

Fox, Mem. "What Next in the Read-Aloud Battle?: Win or Lose?" *The Reading Teacher* 67, no. 1 (2013): 4-8. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1185. Mem Fox argues the importance of reading aloud to students.

Gritter, Kristine. "Promoting Lively Literature Discussion." *The Reading Teacher* 64, no. 6 (2011): 445-49. doi:10.1598/RT.64.6.7. The article explains how to promote better discussions about literature in the classroom and how to create an environment that is student-centered rather than teacher centered.

Mikics, David. *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013. The book discusses the importance of reading slowly in a time when there are many distractions. The author provides rules to follow in order to slow read.

Paul, Richard and Linda Elder. *The Thinker's Guide to How to Read a Paragraph: The Art of Close Reading*. Dillon Beach, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2006. The book discusses the theory of close reading, the five levels of close reading and includes practice exercises in close reading intended for adults.

Senechal, Diana. "Let Strategies Serve Literature." *Educational Leadership*, March 2011, 52-56. The article discusses strategies for teaching literature and recommends making the text the driving focus of the unit being taught.

Shanahan, Timothy. "This Is Not Close Reading (But We'll Tell You What Is)." *Scholastic Instructor*, Winter 2014, 28-30. The article explains close reading and offers questions to each with the first reading, second reading, and third reading of a text.

White, Bruce. "Toward a Learning Commons: My Journey; Your Journey." *Teacher Librarian* 38, no. 3, 27-30. Accessed September 21, 2014. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lih&AN=59242985&site=ehost-live>. The article looks at the changing face of libraries as we move toward learning commons, as well as the impact that technology and 21st century skills and students have on them.

Notes

¹Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2011, p. 7