



The Breadwinner and the struggle for Social Justice

by Sarah Anne Korenyik, 2015 CTI Fellow
Northwest School of the Arts

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Sixth grade English Language Arts, both standard and honors

Keywords: *The Breadwinner*, Deborah Ellis, Afghanistan, peace education, 6th Grade English Language Arts,

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: For this unit, students will close read the novel *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis along with other non-fiction articles to understand the nation that is Afghanistan and the struggles the people face in time of change and uncertainty under the Taliban's rule. The main character's role for her family changes dramatically and the entire family struggles to adapt. Students will use the main characters' struggles to explore different ways of navigating this new life under the Taliban control and explore ways situations could be different for all the members of society. Throughout the novel students will be asked to explore their beliefs about violence and if these beliefs would change if the students were in the main character's place. Students will conduct a research project on Afghanistan to familiarize themselves with the culture, history, and traditions of life. Students will also create a diorama to accurately depict their favorite scene from the novel. Furthermore, Honors students will be asked to create a travel brochure that portrays Afghanistan in a positive light and will make people want to visit the country.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 68 students in sixth grade Honors and Standard English Language Arts.

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work

The Breadwinner and the Struggle for Social Justice

Sarah Anne Korenyik

Introduction

Afghanistan is a country with, for many, a lesser-known history that includes more than just Al-Qaeda, violence, and oppression. In the 1970s Afghanistan was a much different nation than we know it in present time; it was a very prosperous nation with close connections to the Soviet Union. During this time, women had the right to attend universities and work outside the home, along with the beginning of modernizing the country.ⁱ However, in 1988,

In September, Osama bin Laden and 15 other Islamists form the group al-Qaida, or “the base”, to continue their jihad, or holy war, against the Soviets and other who they say oppose their goal of a pure nation governed by Islam. With their belief that the Soviet’s faltering war in Afghanistan was directly attributable to their fighting, they claim victory in their first battle, but also begin to shift their focus to America, saying the remaining superpower is the main obstacle to the establishment of a state based on Islam.ⁱⁱ

From this point forward, turmoil and change are a constant in the lives of the people of Afghanistan. Many flee to Pakistan or other nearby nations in the hope of finding peace while those left behind face a regime of totally different ideals than the previous governments. During this time, famine and drought are rampant, amplifying the difficulties the nation is already facing. By 1995

Newly formed Islamic militia, the Taliban, rises to power on promises of peace. Most Afghans, exhausted by years of drought, famine and war, approve of the Taliban for upholding traditional Islamic values. The Taliban outlaw cultivation of poppies for the opium trade, crack down on crime, and curtail the education and employment of women. Women are required to be fully veiled and are not allowed outside alone. Islamic law is enforced via public executions and amputations. The United States refuses to recognize the authority of the Taliban.ⁱⁱⁱ

This is the beginning of what many people are familiar with today. The hatred of Americans, strong desire for an Islamist state, and strict control over its citizens, especially women, are what many people associate with Afghanistan, culminating in the attacks on September 11, 2001, where

Hijackers commandeer four commercial airplanes and crash them into the World Trade Center Towers in New York, the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., and a Pennsylvania field, killing thousands. Days later, U.S. officials say bin Laden, the Saudi exile believed to be hiding in Afghanistan, is the prime suspect in the attack.^{iv}

The outrage many citizens felt after the attacks spilled over into several different aspects of life. Hate crimes rose dramatically (and continue to be higher in 2015 than pre 9/11)

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the program (F.B.I.'s Uniform Crime Reports) typically recorded between 20 and 30 anti-Muslim hate crimes per year. But in 2001 that number rose more than tenfold to nearly 500. In the years since, annual hate crimes against Muslims have consistently hovered in the 100-150 range, roughly five times higher than the pre-9/11 rate.^v

Many citizens also elected to join the armed services within the United States, many that were too young to fully comprehend the global issues of 9/11 as it was happening. The *Seattle Times* shares several instances of young men opting to join the military, citing 9/11 as a major cause for their enlistment.

The tens of thousands of young men and women...who have enlisted in the military this year grew up in the shadow of 9/11, often too young to remember the world well before it. Some say they want to serve a country that's been in a war against terrorism since their early childhood; others say they want to find control in a world that's seemingly spun out of control.^{vi}

Noddings argues throughout her text *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War* that there are several different reasons why a person may choose to join the military, including patriotism, financial gain, a greater sense of being, as well as finding an existential meaning for existence. She states

...We can see that several features of war make a possible contribution: We join something bigger than ourselves, feel part of a great spectacle, allow ourselves to be controlled by outside forces, and escape from the trivial responsibilities of everyday life. For those who have experienced little personal success, war holds the attraction of participating in national success.^{vii}

Noddings also states "religions have contributed substantially to the instigation and maintenance of war by manipulating and controlling the minds of citizens."^{viii} This argument can be made for each side, American and the people of Afghanistan. For many Americans, the religion of Afghanistan, Islam, is synonymous with terrorism and the word jihad, causing Americans to feel the need to correct the perceived wrongs of the

religion. Noddings states “terrorists are often filled with hatred, and yet they want a form of respectability.... it is worth noting that it is extremists who speak of jihad as war, whereas many moderate Muslims think of jihad as a struggle. Such struggle need not be violent”^x Noddings quotes Louise Richardson “Terrorists want to be considered soldiers at war with an enemy...the concept of jihad, as invoked by Islamic extremists, for example, is all about war.”^x A further example of terrorist mindset is continued when Richardson states

Terrorists like to be considered soldiers at war both because of the legitimacy they believe it brings their cause and for the status they believe it confers on them. For the United States to declare war on a bunch of radical extremists living under the protection of an impoverished Afghanistan is to elevate their stature in a way that they could not possibly hope to do themselves. And, too: The language of warfare also induces what Michael Howard has called a “war psychosis.” People expect immediate action. ^{xi}

Many Americans feel the need to right the wrongs of what occurred that September day and the days following, but many do not realize the bigger picture of what has occurred. A few extremists have radically changed the face of Afghanistan and Islam, and many Americans do not have the educational background to realize that there is a difference between the minority and the majority; the minority being the attention seeking, and receiving, while the majority just wants a peaceful atmosphere to live and raise a family. The text *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis shares how the “other half” lives, and how their lives and beliefs are not so different from an average American; safety, shelter, food, happiness, and freedom.

Rationale

When I originally embarked on my journey at Northwest, I taught eighth grade Language Arts and was able to teach literature connected to World War II. World War II has always been my favorite time period to study and I spent much of my adolescent years watching documentaries about the Holocaust and movements in the Pacific Theater, as well as arguing various possibilities and outcomes of the war within my family. These debates were conveyed again as my young students could not possibly fathom some of the atrocities discussed within the books.

The gruesome topic of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima was the subject of the first novel, *Hiroshima* by John Hersey, I read with my honors class. I thoroughly enjoyed the activities I used and the new ones I had planned for this upcoming school year that included a gallery walk of survivor art, a virtual field trip to Hiroshima as it looks today, memorial planning, and debating the morality of dropping the bomb. However, on the

Thursday before school started, I changed grade levels and moved to teach sixth grade Language Arts.

This move required regrouping and rethinking about what I would be teaching, especially in regards to what novel sets were readily available and would be age appropriate, as the graphic content within *Hiroshima* most certainly would not be appropriate. I racked my brain for Holocaust novels that I could utilize similar lesson plans and just replace the resources I had planned to use with *Hiroshima*. However, many novels discussing the Holocaust are taught in earlier grades (such as Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*) and I did not want to repeat something students had already read. I also realized maybe it was time for me to step out of my comfort zone and embrace a new topic all together.

In a panic, I spoke with my fellow sixth grade Language Arts teacher to pick her brain about ideas she already uses and what she knows will work. She shared with me the novel *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis and I was intrigued. I admit, the culture of Afghanistan was not one I was familiar with, and I did not believe my students would know either. I was in seventh grade when 9/11 happened and I grew up watching the horrific scenes of war play out across the television as U.S. military forces were fighting the Taliban. I knew my views were a bit skewed and I wanted to educate myself to bring a new understanding of this culture.

After reading *The Breadwinner* and processing what happened throughout the book, I realized that there were several themes in it that I was passionate about and I knew could reach my students as well, particularly a changing family unit and a girl's right to education (my school is predominately female). My hope within this unit is to allow my students to analyze their own life and rights they have living within the United States and connect with the main character within the text.

Background

My school is Northwest School of the Arts (also referred to as simply Northwest or NWSA) near uptown Charlotte, North Carolina. Northwest is a magnet school of the arts within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district that is grades 6-12. Our overall population is 1020 students with 561 students in high school and 459 in middle school; 27% of our population is male while 73% is female. 49% of our student population is African American, 38% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 5% other ethnicities. Northwest's art classes include visual arts, dance, costume design, theater, orchestra, and chorus, with several sub-classes offered within these strands. These strands of art classes

are known as the students' majors (some students are double majors). Students are required to audition to enter the school, as well as enter the lottery. After passing these processes, students can continue to attend Northwest as long as they are passing their majors classes and must re-audition and pass before entering 9th grade. Our school has a wide variety of students from all walks of life who go on to achieve amazing feats at young ages.

I teach three classes of sixth grade Language Arts to the same students every day. I have one honors class with twenty-four students, and two standard classes with twenty-two students. I have four students with 504 Plans. My honors classes are at or above reading level, while my standards classes are at or below grade level reading. This unit is intended for sixth grade language arts, but could be modified for higher-level fifth grade classes or lower level seventh grade classes. My hope for this novel, *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis, is that students will be able to develop close reading skills to enable them to have a better understanding of the text, as well as connect on several levels with the text. I also hope to continue the arts education magnet theme by incorporating an outlet for students to express their artistic abilities by creating an original piece of work that has meaning to them, whether it is a drawing, writing (lyrics, poems, etc.), movement, or music.

Paying attention to detail is a skill that benefits artists of all majors, as well as helps in the classroom, as evident with the goal of close reading skills. My hope is that the attention to details will also allow for students to see the different ways of exploring an issue beyond violence or pointing out the differences. Northwest is truly a unique place to work, with students coming from all walks of life and experiences, and some are not adept at approaching an issue in a way to talk things through or view it from the other person's viewpoint. Our school is one of love and belonging, however, our students and staff can become accustomed to a school life of relative safety and ease that does not always incorporate what the "real world" is like. Unfortunately, we do have rare instances of bullying, hate, and violence, but oftentimes it is because of what our students experience in their home life, where they deal with drug addiction, absent parents for a variety of reasons, and violence in their home or in their community. These differences can create waves occasionally, but typically our school is very peace filled, anti-bully (we have several pro-caring days a year where guest speakers come and share ways to accept everybody as well as share students' experiences to raise awareness that everyone, at one point or another, has been bullied), and accepting. Sometimes we are so caught up in "It's a Northwest Thing" (as evident by our t-shirts so many love to wear, myself included), that we forget there is a different way of life beyond Northwest's walls. In

some ways, this is a good thing, knowing we are so focused on each other and what we do at our school (there is always something to celebrate), and in other ways, we can forget the bigger picture, that we will not always be at Northwest and that our world is not as peace filled and accepting as we have become accustomed to here at NWSA. Outside our walls are violence, wars, and people not as tolerant of differences (and many do not wish to try to learn about the differences). *The Breadwinner* opens up young reader's minds to see what every day life is like in Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule, including children their own age.

III. Objective/Standards

In this unit, students will be exposed to a land and culture many are most likely not familiar with, especially in a location that typically does not have a positive light when it is discussed in the media, news, etc. In today's world where news is shared in the blink of an eye through social media and twenty-four hours a day news, it is important to know who is being discussed and to have some background knowledge on the people so that conclusions are not blindly made. Noddings states "perhaps our greatest task in peace education-teaching people to listen to one another and maintain the lines of communication."^{xii} War has torn this country apart, and the violence has killed many people, especially civilians. Students need to look at war and the outcome of war, as well as explore other plausible avenues to avoid war.

The battlefield of war is not contained within one area of a country and only affects the people who are fighting in the war. Even though war is not fought within the United States soil, some students may have experienced violence that has changed their family dynamics and they can lend valuable first hand information about how violence and war (street war, gang war, maybe a family member who was in the military was injured at war) can change a family. This is also something teachers should be mindful of while teaching this unit.

A second goal of this unit is for students to look at rights and privileges citizens living in the United States have versus citizens living within Afghanistan under the Taliban. These are drastically different and many students could not imagine a world without being able to walk anywhere they wanted, choose what clothes to wear, or what jobs they will fill when they are older. A large portion of these rights and privileges are based on your gender. Throughout the book, the protagonist deals with a changing female role in society, and seeing the struggle her older sister and mother have in accepting the new requirements of their changing government. Gender is also the deciding factor of education. As much as many students may complain about going to school, many could

not imagine a world where they were not *allowed* to go to school, based on something they have no control over.

These two goals feed into the overarching goal when students are reading any novel, and that is to be able to understand what the characters within the novel are experiencing. Empathy is a social skill many students lack^{xiii}. Within this novel, many students will be able to feel empathy towards the main characters, as well as the other characters within the text. Empathy needs to be practiced as much as possible to ensure students begin to understand and pick up on what empathy is and how important it is in every day life as a citizen. Norma Deitch Feshbach and Seymour Feshbach's findings "Empathy and Education" in Decety's collection *Social Neuroscience of Empathy* sheds light on empathy and its advantages in the classroom.

The empathetic individual is more likely to understand and appreciate the perspective and feelings of members of diverse ethnic groups. Greater understanding and sharing of the feelings of the "other" should result in less prejudice, less conflict, and more positive social overtures.^{xiv}

Close reading skills can also play a part in students becoming more empathetic. Feshbach and Feshbach cite a 2001 study by Budin stating "a number of educators have suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between the process of reading and empathy, such that reading helps heighten and reinforce empathy."^{xv} Becoming a twenty-first century student and global citizen is a common goal all educators are working towards, and empathy is a key skill necessary to fulfill these goals.

A great part about this unit is that it is intended to cover a wide range of skills included within the sixth grade language arts common core standards (a more in-depth explanation of the standards can be found in Appendix 1). This unit will incorporate several different learning styles and intelligences by reading a realistic-fiction novel, as well as informational text, writing, and speaking and listening. Students will be able to design art pieces and posters to share with other students throughout the school, as they will be displayed throughout the classroom and the hallways.

IV. Content Overview

The content of the seminar, Peace Education, lends itself quite easily to the contents of *The Breadwinner*. Throughout the seminar we read and discussed Nel Noddings' novel *Peace Education: How We Came to Love and Hate War* that includes chapters on destruction, masculinity and the warrior, hatred, religion, and women and war. Each of

these topics was discussed extensively among the thirteen seminar members, offering new views of each, as well as causing me to reflect on my own views.

The country of Afghanistan has been impacted by all of the previously mentioned topics from Noddings text. Afghanistan and its people have been shaken to the core of their existence over the years. More recently, the country is being shaken again as the Taliban takes over provinces within the country. Students need to have an understanding of a place that has been in and out of the news for the last 14 years, and will most likely continue to make headlines in the future.

One way to approach Noddings' book is to think about what Noddings is asking us as educators to do in our position of educating our students. She "wonders how it is that wars can continue to be fought when there is so much intelligent and articulate opposition to them?"^{xvi} She then asks us two questions, which can shape the way information is presented of the aforementioned topics: "What are the psychological mechanisms that support war? What can schools do to reduce their power?"^{xvii} Throughout the seminar, this is what I questioned myself, especially in conjunction with the novel I intend to share with my students.

Noddings is advocating for a more peaceful society, but realistically we know that not every single person will share the same beliefs, due to a variety of reasons. In her introduction, she is advocating for an education that can provide information including peace and peace movements and that this type of education will "encourage more people to oppose war but, even if that does not happen, debate on the topic should be better informed."^{xviii} Informing our students is a high priority, and how we inform our students, especially for teachers of younger students, can have an impact as they progress in formulating who they are as a person and what they believe. It is key to not lead them to think how you think or tell them what to think, but rather give them the tools to think for themselves and formulate their own opinion. Noddings advises, "In handling highly controversial issues, we cannot-usually should not-tell our students what they should believe and act upon, but we can get them to think."^{xix} This is much of what Noddings discusses throughout her book, and I know she pushed me to challenge my own belief system and reflect upon how I present information to my students, not only in what I present, but how I present it. "History is written through the eyes of the winner" is a common phrase spoken in our discussion throughout the seminar, and it caused me to reflect on the type of education I received and realize I sometimes need to take a step back and find alternate ways of sharing information.

In addition to thinking about information that is presented to our students, educators must also reflect on his or her own belief system, specifically when it comes to values of war and pacifism. Noddings states “students should be asked to consider: if your group is faced with public contempt, obstruction, and even death, do you persist in the struggle for social justice? Do you stand by your commitment to nonviolence? How?”^{xx} These additional questions guide classroom discussions and fit the objectives of looking at individual rights and privileges of citizens of the United States and feeling empathy for characters within *The Breadwinner*.

The commitment one makes in deciding how to deal with struggles with social injustice may be made in a time of peace and is an easy “I always want peace and nonviolence.” However, as a human, is everything so clear-cut black and white, especially when it comes to issues of war? Do we always say, “yes I will fight” or “no I will not fight”? We may think that we have an answer, but when our values and beliefs are challenged, oftentimes our original answers disappear. We may consider ourselves to be pacifists and avoid war at all cost. However, is that even a viable option? Noddings writes, “Almost all peace lovers admit that they would defend themselves and, even more certainly their children.”^{xxi} However, within the novel *The Breadwinner*, the reader quickly realizes that the parents do not have the power to attempt to fight for their children. Instead, the power is given to the children to help defend and save their families.

The choices of pacifism and views of violence oftentimes come from a religious standpoint. One of the major conversations that needs to be had is the discussion of religion; not to prove one is “better than” another, but to bring awareness of their principals (or what is not a key belief), and to critically think about the world around us. Growing up in the Bible belt, along with currently living in a progressive city, conflicting views of religion are presented in education and personal beliefs. The goal is to broaden the horizon and understanding of Islam to students and allow them to realize that a small fraction of people have created a totally different sect and mindset, much of which the world judges (this will also allow for cross curricular learning, which is pertinent in today’s education).

Another topic of discussion to hold with students is females’ rights to an education. This topic can aid in peace education by allowing all people, not just those deemed worthy by society, to be educated and informed, which Noddings points out as being key to change the mindset of the world. While the topic of education may specifically apply to females in connection to the text (even though male literacy rates in Afghanistan for

males averages about 45% overall^{xxii}), a topic that will connect with all students is right versus privilege. Male and females in Afghanistan cannot listen to music, have religious freedom, or even the freedom to cut their hair as they please. These topics resonate with nearly every student, where even if they have strict parents or feel like they live in a “prison,” they still have more freedom than many of their counterparts in Afghanistan.^{xxiii} These restrictions lead to unrest within the nation, and often lead to violent outburst. What other avenues could the people have to show their disdain for these rules, without violence, that will also bring about change? These are examples of conversation that need to happen in the classroom to bring the awareness to students to be the catalyst for change.

V. Teaching Strategies

I teach language arts every day to the same group of students. I plan to start this novel in mid January and have the unit last about twelve days, depending on how long it takes students to read and complete research for their posters and dioramas. Students will already be familiar with academic vocabulary we will be using within the text, and we will now be focusing on analyzing the text and making connections. At the start of the school year, we begin a list of academic vocabulary that ranges in words from theme, genre, text structure, author’s purpose, etc. and must be used within a Tic-Tac-Toe board for student choice. This also serves as a basis for when we begin specifically studying different types of literature. In addition to academic vocabulary, before my classes began reading any literature, we went over genre and discussed theme, persuasion, author’s purpose, main idea, elements of fiction and non-fiction, and other content specific vocabulary. These are referenced throughout the year, and students can look back on their notes within their binders and/or Interactive Notebooks.

Students keep a small binder with 5 tabs for forms, vocabulary, bellringers, notes, and EOG practice. Students also have an Interactive Notebook (IN), where most classwork takes place. This is a place where students will be completing most of their work with this novel study. A running table of contents is kept in the classroom to inform students of the appropriate page for all work and keeping work sequential for easy reference. Some pages are worksheets that are glued or taped in, but a majority of the work is written on the actual pages.

My students will be arranged into small groups of four. This is done to ensure that every group has at least one strong reader in the group to help the others in the small

group. This also makes it easier for students to work together for the various strategies I plan to use throughout the unit.

There are several strategies I will implement to analyze text and make connections:

- Think-pair-share
- Chunking
- Venn Diagrams
- Notice and Notes signposts
- Jigsaw/ graffiti writes
- Gallery Walks
- Peer editing and review
- Analyzing literary elements
- Cooperative Learning
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Blended Learning

While many of these strategies are well known, some teachers may not be as familiar with the ones listed above. A brief overview of these lesser-known strategies follows below.

Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst outline strategies for the signposts in the book titled *Notice & Notes-Strategies for Close Reading*. These signposts are found in many fiction books and have students close read the text and connect on a deeper level to what they are reading. I taught these signposts in October and my students really enjoyed connecting to the text. The signposts come with their own anchor questions where students stop and ask themselves the anchor question. There are six signposts: Contrasts and Contradictions, Aha Moments, Tough Questions, Words of the Wiser, Again and Again, and Memory Moment.^{xxiv} Students will utilize these signposts by either annotating in their books (if they choose to purchase a copy) or using sticky notes to mark which signpost and answer the anchor question.

Jigsaw strategy is a cooperative learning strategy that was first utilized in 1971 in Austin, Texas after desegregation occurred within the schools to diffuse the tension created by the distrust of different racial groups suddenly in one classroom.^{xxv} This strategy is great to allow students to teach each other, with the teacher becoming the facilitator. Also, this strategy works well with Peace Education, as students must let go of any preconceived notions of other students to work together to learn. Recently, I have learned of what is called a graffiti write and while I have not used it in my classroom yet, I have participated in one at a professional development and led it with staff at my school

when I gave a professional development.^{xxvi} The jigsaw and graffiti write can be used together and are quite flexible to suit the needs of your classroom.

Traditionally, a jigsaw involves two different groups, a home group and an expert group, but in my experience it can become a bit overwhelming and disjointed, so I am going to focus on explaining a jigsaw using a graffiti write (to find out more information on a traditional jigsaw, the website www.jigsaw.org has great information). To implement these strategies, you first need to divide your class into groups of 5 or 6. Once within this group, students will need the item they are to study and become experts on, butcher paper, and different colored markers for each student. An easy way to implement this is to use a computer/iPad that has all the material on it using a website like Tackk, where it can be broken down step by step for students and all materials are just a click away. Tackk makes it easy to differentiate as well, where you the teacher can incorporate various learning styles (an article, a video, a picture, etc.) that you can assign. Students will then pick a piece to focus on and then become the expert of this piece. Each student will read his or her piece and must come up with one sentence that summarizes the piece or was an aha moment and write that down on the butcher paper. Then, students get 60 seconds to explain their piece to their fellow group members. While the explanation is going on, the other students are writing words or phrases that stand out to them on the paper. As a group they must then decide on and circle 5-7 words (the teacher can decide the numbers of words required) that are repeated throughout the statements or written down during the presentation of information. These words must then be used to create a final statement that summarizes the finding of the group (additional words may be added, but those circled words must be incorporated). These statements are then presented to the entire class. An easy way to do this is to utilize Google Slides (through Google Drive) where everyone has access at once to their own group's slide to add their statement and decorate it as they feel (personalization is great, especially in middle school classrooms). Then, the entire class can see how each group was similar or different in thinking and further discuss these differences. Depending on the length of the assigned work, this could easily be done in one class session and is very engaging (the teacher can also monitor the color markers students are using and see who is actively participating and who is not).

Visual Thinking Strategies are used to help with critical thinking and deepen connections to the piece of work being analyzed. It is based off of three question 1) "What is going on in this _____" (fill in the blank for what you are looking at, example painting, picture, etc.) 2) What do you see that makes you say that (have evidence and proof for what you say. The catch phrase "Don't talk smack, bring it on

back!” is utilized in my class quite frequently. Students know that this means they need to have proof before they can just say anything within the work. 3) What more can you find? This requires students to look deeper at the item and find something more to add to their previous thoughts about the piece. Students typically do the first question during a 10-12 minute timed independent writing portion of class. Then we have a class discussion for about 10 minutes, where students must share their answers, speaking one at a time and being very descriptive to prove their thinking. Students draw a line where they stopped writing on their paper before finally, the third part is when students can write new ideas from hearing other students’ answers, or continuing off their previous ideas. My students really enjoy this and get excited to work on this, even if it means writing for almost ten minutes straight! Visual thinking strategies also connect to many students because they can analyze a picture better than writing out ideas and thoughts, as well as connecting to the magnet theme of Northwest by incorporating literacy skills with the arts.

Students will also utilize Chromebooks to complete research for several projects. The media specialist will help students find ways to conduct research, as well as create a bibliography to include with the assignments. Rubrics are also used and included with each assignment. CMS now has a ten point grading school, so students can utilize the rubric and knowing the grading scale to work to receive the grade he or she wishes to receive. CMS also divides their grades between a formal and informal grade. Formal grades count for 65% of students’ grades, while informal grades count for 35%.

Materials students will need in order to be successful:

- Copies of the novel *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis. A class set will work fine, as all reading will be done in class.
- Audio book for *The Breadwinner* (optional, but a great added piece for lower level readers or ELL students)
- Chromebooks (or another type of technology)
- Novel packet
- Butcher/poster paper
- Shoe box (or any other box) for diorama project
- Markers, colored pencils, etc. for poster project and dioramas
- Sticky notes
- Websites for researching Afghanistan
- Tack website for graffiti write

VI. Classroom Activities

Bellringers/Warm-ups-Students receive a weekly Bellringer packet from *180 Days of Reading*. Every day consists of an EOG style passage and multiple-choice questions. We complete this to familiarize students with EOG style questions and wording, as well as to practice test taking strategies, such as elimination and searching for vocabulary words. Students also complete *Wordly Wise* (standards class uses book 6 while honors uses book 7) vocabulary words and the practice. This is to expand students' vocabulary for reading and writing, but also to prepare them for the EOG. These activities take around 20 minutes each day.

While reading the novel, we will be stopping and having discussions of what is going on and what students are noticing, especially using their sticky notes for the Notice and Notes signposts. We will be taking notice of scenarios where the people of Afghanistan has similarities to Americans, and where differences occur, especially due to the Taliban's rule. Any work not completed in class becomes homework. Also, if there is any extra time in class, students may work on their writing or projects that are assigned for this unit.

Day one: The first day is for introducing the novel. I will have students complete a KWL-Q (Know-What to Know-What I Learned-Questions) chart in their Interactive Notebooks about Afghanistan. We will discuss these charts as a whole class, along with sharing the questions students have that they can begin to think about and guide their search when they complete their research for their projects (which begins on Day 2). Next students will think-pair-share the meaning of the word "breadwinner". We will briefly discuss as a class. Finally, we will use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to look at the cover of the book and predict what the book could be about, based on the title and cover of the book. This activity and discussion will take around 15 minutes, depending on the engagement level during the student discussion.

After this has concluded, I will pass out the packets students will use and reference throughout the novel that includes close reading questions, quotes, vocabulary, graphic organizers, and other helpful references. Students will also receive the instructions for the diorama project (which counts as a formal grade), and current event about the Taliban in the news and written response rubric. Honors students will also be completing a travel brochure that will portray Afghanistan in a positive light, rather than the negative that is so often depicted in the media forcing students to synthesize and apply knowledge* their perspective on the country.

Students next begin a graffiti write at their table using the link <https://tackk.com/wh0e9n>. Students will be choose from four different articles, all relating to the Taliban, and become experts on their article for the graffiti write (all of the articles and instructions are there for students to complete). After students have completed their graffiti write at their table, they will work on their persuasion chart, completing the brainstorming activity as well as the two paragraphs stating their opinion on the Taliban. What they do not finish will become homework.

Days two and three: Students will be going into the media center to work on their Afghanistan posters. The media specialist will share helpful tips for research, as well as how to create a bibliography, which is needed for this project. Students already have the information of what the poster needs to include, a rubric for the poster, and a rubric for the speech. Students will receive a research factsheet to write their findings down on as well as to keep a record of where they found their information, which is needed for the bibliography.

Students will be divided into jigsaw groups and assigned one of the following topics on of Afghan culture: 1) Ethnic groups, food, and traditions 2) music, art, and dance 3) education in Afghanistan-past and present 4) Poetry and the legend of Malalai of Maiwand 5) Landmines in Afghanistan-past and present 6) Clothing and housing 7) Geography of Afghanistan

Each group will then research and complete the poster, following instructions given as well as utilizing the rubric. After the posters are presented, they will be displayed in the hallways to share their findings with others in the school.

Day four: Students will present their posters to their group members while they take notes. Students will also be grading each other on their presentations, based on a presentation rubric. This will take about 30 minutes. After this is over, I will place two questions on the board that Noddings uses on page 142 her book: *If your group is faced with public contempt, obstruction, and even death, do you persist in the struggle for social justice? Do you stand by your commitment to nonviolence? How?* As a class, we will need to have a discussion on social justice and what it is, and have students decide their view on violence. Do they always believe that violence is not the answer? Is there ever a situation where violence is okay? Students will be given a few minutes to discuss with their table members when it is/is not okay and why. After this has been discussed, students will complete a quick write in their IN on their views/ideas and what was discussed in class. They will come back to this quick write at the end of the novel to see if their answers have changed or if they are the same.

Following this quick write, the class will then complete an exercise on rights versus privileges. One side of the room will be for agree while the other is for disagree. I will say scenarios to the class where each individual must decide their opinion on it. Some example scenarios will include going to school is a right, free education is privilege, women going to school is a privilege, wearing whatever clothes you want is a privilege, getting whatever haircut you want is a privilege, listening to music is a right (many more ideas can be found at <http://www.rawa.org/rules.htm>). I will then ask students to defend their answer. If any time remains, students may begin looking up vocabulary for the first couple of chapters that has already been provided.

Day five: Students will begin reading/listening to *The Breadwinner* chapters 1-3. As students are reading/listening, students will answer the questions that are in their packets

Day five: Students will read/listen to chapters 4-6, answering questions in their novel packet.

Day six: Students will read/listen to chapters 7-9, answering questions in their novel packet.

Day seven: Students will have class time to get caught up on their novel packet, complete research for their brochures (honors) and their diorama projects.

Day eight: Students will read/listen to chapters 10-12, answering questions in their novel packet.

Day nine: Students will read/listen to chapters 13-15, completing their novel packet. Students will also need to complete their KWL-Q chart that was created on day one. I will also put the two questions I had on the board on day four back on the board and ask students to write their answer to the questions now, if they had changed or stayed the same and why. I will also ask them to explore how these questions could connect with the novel *The Breadwinner*; we will discuss how the main characters reacted when their groups were challenged and if they agree with their reactions. Students will then watch an interview of Malala Yousafzai and write a written response to the interview. If it is not finished, it becomes homework.

Day ten-twelve: Students will have class time to work on their diorama project, brochure projects, and catch up with any missing novel assignments.

Day thirteen: Students will present their dioramas to the class. These dioramas will be displayed throughout the classroom.

Assessment

Students will be assessed throughout the unit, both formally and informally. Everyday we will discuss and ask questions to check for understanding, as well as students answering questions within their novel packet. The first assessment will be the KWL-Q chart. They will need to fill in the “What they learned” part of the chart and add any answers to the questions they had. Also looking at the two questions from Noddings will count as an informal assessment to check if they changed their minds as far as how they would stand up for themselves and the connections they made with the characters in the novel.

Another informal assessment is the graffiti write to gather information about the Taliban, form an opinion, and persuade others to agree with their opinion. This is completed on day one.

The first formal assessment will be their posters for Afghan Culture, which will be shared with their jigsaw groups and shared in the hallway at school. A rubric will be used to grade their poster and as well as a peer assessment rubric for their group presentation.

A second formal assessment, and culminating novel activity, will be to create a diorama of a scene (student’s choice) from the novel. A rubric will be used to grade their dioramas and their written piece to explain the diorama. Students will also have to write a one-page response following the prompt on the diorama handout. For extra credit, students may come up with a poem, song, dance, additional piece of art, etc. to share with the class to connect to the novel and their major within the school.

Resources to use within the unit

Poster for “Afghan Culture”^{xxvii}

All groups must complete a poster with the following details for a presentation to the class:

* The title of the poster is your group’s topic. Make sure the names of all group members are listed on the front too!

* Your group will be assigned one of the following topics:

1. Ethnic groups, food & traditions
2. Music, art & dance
3. Education in Afghanistan-Past and Present
4. Poetry & the Legend of Malalai of Maiwand
5. Landmines in Afghanistan-Past and Present
6. Clothing & Housing

7. Geography of Afghanistan

* Posters should be divided into equal parts with each individual in the group being responsible for part of the creation and design. The poster must include research-based facts about the different aspect of Afghan culture. The group's poster must include a minimum of 10 facts from your research (you can have more than ten too). All group members will take notes on loose-leaf notebook paper to be submitted for a grade with the poster. The poster must also include a minimum of 4 pictures or drawings (these can be hand drawn, cut from magazines, etc.). You may NOT print pictures at school for this assignment. Groups MUST sketch a rough draft of the poster before they begin to work with the poster paper, showing where all facts, pictures, names and the bibliography page will be located to submit for a grade with the poster. **POSTERS MUST BE COLORFUL AND CREATIVE!**

* A bibliography page (a list of references) using the MLA format for documentation must be included on the poster in the lower right corner. Groups must include a minimum of 3 sources of information (you can have more). It should be typed and printed to attach. Groups will create this using the Easy Bib website at: <http://easybib.com/>

Afghanistan Travel Guide Brochure^{xxviii}

Using the rubric provided by the teacher and the graphic organizer for the brochure, you will create a travel guide brochure for Afghanistan based on your research of this country. You must utilize at least 4 primary and secondary sources to gather your information to include in the brochure. The following items must be included for the Afghanistan Travel Guide Brochure:

1. Your brochure should be creative, colorful and original in design, content and writing.
2. You must complete a "research factsheet" for each source you use to gather information. You can find this on my wiki page.
3. You must use at least 4 different sources for your information and/or graphics.
4. You must write a descriptive paragraph about Afghanistan to entice the reader to visit the area.
5. You must also compile a "Works Cited" list of references for all facts and graphics in your brochure. This may be handwritten or typed and printed on a single sheet of paper.
6. Proofread your brochure to make sure there are no grammar, punctuation or spelling errors.
7. Use the rubric as a guide to produce a quality product for the score of your choice!

Persuasion Chart

Topic: I want to persuade _____ to _____.
(audience) (purpose)

Brainstorm reasons here.

Organize your reasons here.

Least important

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Most important

6. _____

Evidence:

Appendix 1: North Carolina Common Core Standards

Reading Literature and Informational Text Standards

We will use RL 1 and RI 1 to cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. This will be used in the novel packet as well as the dioramas. RL 2 and RI 2 determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details, which can again be seen in the novel packet and dioramas.

We will use RL 3 in the diorama projects by describing how the story's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

We will use RL 5 in the diorama projects by analyzing how a particular scene fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

We will use RL 7 while listening to the audio version of the text to compare and contrast the experience of reading a story to listening to the audio version of the text, including contrasting what students "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listening.

We will use RI 7, integrating information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue, during the graffiti write for different articles about the Taliban in Afghanistan as well as during our research for the projects about Afghanistan.

Writing Common Core Standards

We will use W4, produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience, during the writing about the Taliban as well as the research project on Afghanistan. Writing is also used with the diorama project.

W7, conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate, W8, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources, and W 9, draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, are all used in our Afghanistan projects, as well as the Honors' class travel brochure.

Speaking and listening standards

Standard 1 A-D, engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly, will be evident through class discussions, as well as when presenting their Afghanistan posters to their groups.

Standard 4, present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation, will be evident in the Afghanistan poster presentations as well as diorama presentations. ^{xxix}

Annotated Bibliography for Students and Teachers

"A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/>. This resource is used for a timeline that is easy to understand and explain what has occurred throughout recent history.

"Afghanistan Too Unstable to Withdraw U.S. Troops as Planned, Obama Says." Newsela. October 19, 2015. Accessed November 20, 2015. <https://newsela.com/articles/afghanistan-ustroops/id/12507/>. This resource was used in the graffiti write on day one for students to become familiar with what the Taliban was and share with other group members.

Beers, G. Kylene, and Robert E. Probst. *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. Heinemann, 2013. 112-187. This resource is used to help students close read by finding signposts throughout the novel that were written on sticky notes.
Decety, Jean. *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*. Paperback ed. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: MIT Pr., 2011. This resources gave insight to the connection between empathy and the classroom.

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2000. This resource is the novel that is used throughout the unit to close read and all activities stem from.

"English Language Arts Standards." | Common Core State Standards Initiative. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>. These are the standards used for the unit

"Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) Program | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) Program | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/kabul/education/enhancement-of-literacy-in-afghanistan-ela-program/>. This website showed me the literacy rates in Afghanistan

"If the Taliban Takes Power, Afghan Women Fear Their Freedoms May Vanish." Newsela. February 13, 2014. Accessed November 20, 2015. <https://newsela.com/articles/afghan-women/id/2674/>. This resource was used in the graffiti write on day one for students to become familiar with what the Taliban was and share with other group members.

Noddings, Nel. *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. This was the book used in our seminar with Rick

Gay. It describes various difficulties of peace education and ways to try incorporate it into our classrooms.

"OVERVIEW." The Jigsaw Classroom. Accessed November 22, 2015. <https://www.jigsaw.org/>. This resource provides background on the jigsaw strategy, as well as ways to implement this strategy in the classroom.

"Taliban Declare 'defeat' of U.S., Allies in Afghanistan." Reuters. December 29, 2014. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/29/us-afghanistan-war-idUSKBN0K70UC20141229#uDAeXGU278KTA67D.97>. This resource was used in the graffiti write on day one for students to become familiar with what the Taliban was and share with other group members.

"Taliban | Political and Religious Faction, Afghanistan." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Taliban>. This resource was used in the graffiti write on day one for students to become familiar with what the Taliban was and share with other group members.

"Some of the Restrictions Imposed by Taliban in Afghanistan." Some of the Restrictions Imposed by Taliban in Afghanistan. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://www.rawa.org/rules.htm>. This website shared restrictions on citizens after the Taliban took over. It was also used in the rights and privileges exercise on day four.

ⁱ "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/>.

ⁱⁱ "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/>.

^{iv} "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/>.

^v "Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Are Still Five times More Common Today than before 9/11." Washington Post. Accessed November 21, 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/02/11/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-are-still-five-times-more-common-today-than-before-911/>.

^{vi} Lush, Tamara. "9/11 Inspired Many Young Americans to Enlist in Military." The Seattle Times. September 4, 2011. Accessed November 21, 2015. <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/9-11-inspired-many-young-americans-to-enlist-in-military/>.

-
- vii Noddings, Nel *Peace Education: How we came to Love and Hate War*. Pg 133
- viii Noddings, pg 89
- ix Noddings pg 78
- x Noddings pg 78
- xi Noddings pg 79
- xii Noddings pg 141
- xiii Zaki, Jamil. "What, Me Care? Young Are Less Empathetic." *Scientific American Global RSS*. December 23, 2010. Accessed October 15, 2015.
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-me-care/>.
- xiv Decety, Jean. *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*. Pg 87
- xv Decety pg 87
- xvi Noddings pg 101
- xvii Noddings pg 101
- xviii Noddings pg 1
- xix Noddings pg 151
- xx Noddings pg 142
- xxi Noddings pg 107
- xxii "Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) Program | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." *Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) Program | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. Accessed October 31, 2015.
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/kabul/education/enhancement-of-literacy-in-afghanistan-ela-program/>.
- xxiii "Some of the Restrictions Imposed by Taliban in Afghanistan." *Some of the Restrictions Imposed by Taliban in Afghanistan*. Accessed October 31, 2015.
<http://www.rawa.org/rules.htm>.
- xxiv Beers, G. Kylene, and Robert Probst. *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. 112-187.
- xxv "OVERVIEW." *The Jigsaw Classroom*. Accessed November 22, 2015.
<https://www.jigsaw.org/>.
- xxvi Abby Futrell, NCDLCN conference October 14-15, 2015.
- xxvii Adapted from Lori Sutherland, Northwest School of the Arts 2014-2015 6th grade teacher
- xxviii Adapted from Lori Sutherland, Northwest School of the Arts 2014-2015 6th grade teacher
- xxix "English Language Arts Standards." | *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>.