



What it means to be an Ender: A Study in the Duality of War

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Standard and Honors English I, Genre Study

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

Synopsis: “What it means to be an Ender” aims to highlight the duality in war, how we can simultaneously love and hate it. Through an examination of Orson Scott Card’s science-fiction novel, *Ender’s Game*, students will discuss the psychological factors that endorse war as well as the factors which promote peace. This unit covers approximately ten instructional days wherein students are digging into the novel in conjunction with a variety of informational texts. *Ender’s Game* will be read entirely outside of class and should be completed before the first instructional day so that students have the opportunity to discover connections among themes, characterization, plot, language, setting and mood. While the language of *Ender’s Game* is simple, the themes are not. In this unit, I encourage students to engage personally with the characters while noting their process of thinking. Getting students to think about their thinking can be challenging; however, it is paramount in this unit. When students begin to understand their thinking, they can begin to understand the causes and effects of conflicts, and by extension, be able to peacefully resolve them.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 170 students in Standard and Honors English I, Genre Study.

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By Megan C. Shellenberger

“All war is a symptom of a man’s failure as a thinking animal.” –John Steinbeck

Introduction

Steinbeck’s commentary on our inability to think not only critically, but thoughtfully as well, has a note of truthfulness. I would agree that external conflicts are the effects of ineffectual thinking. Still, rather, not all wars are external. Some are within ourselves. This is the seedling of an idea I had for this unit. To carry out this idea of internalization, I plan on implementing the Reading Apprenticeship (RA) framework in my classroom.

Reading Apprenticeship

This framework is designed to promote individual thought within the classroom. To become individual and free-thinkers—as we all need to be in order to negotiate tough situations encountered in adulthood—students learn to consider their processes for understanding a text or concept. In other words, students will begin to think about their thinking. When students “begin to notice when and where their concentration lapses or their comprehension breaks down,” they can learn to control their thinking and become active participants in their reading.¹ Students will might then begin to challenge their thoughts and the thoughts presented by the author of a text think critically.

Background

I am an English Language Arts teacher at William Amos Hough High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) System. My school has approximately 2,465 students in grades 9-12. Of this population, I teach approximately 170 students yearly. I teach two sections of Honors, three sections of Standard, and one Foundations of English course. English I is a genre study, wherein content is taught in isolation, rather than a common theme-based curriculum. Our units are studies in Short Story, Poetry, Drama, Non-Fiction, and The Novel. While this curriculum unit contains lessons which are not exclusive to one genre, it will be taught toward the end of the semester, with the intention of bridging genres together.

Peace Education Seminar

This seminar on the psychological factors that endorse war has prompted some essential questions. How is it that we love and hate war simultaneously? Nel Noddings, the author of *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*, poses the question which was at the heart of our seminar discussions: “Why is it that so many of us are deeply moved by visual art, fiction, and firsthand accounts of destruction and yet accept war as a means of resolving conflict or defending ourselves?”² These are some of the questions explored in this unit.

Content Objectives

Through the study of the love and hate relationship we have with war as seen in *Ender’s Game*, students will develop awareness of why war has become so central in our history while gaining a sense of author’s purpose, touching on Common Core Standard RL.9-10.2. Students will also consider point of view and determine its effectiveness. By the end of this unit, students will be able to evaluate and justify a character’s actions in consideration of ethics as well as the author’s commentary on war as a game, according to RL.9-10.1 and RL.9-10.4. Throughout this unit, students will refer to informational texts and will be expected to cite textual evidence and analyze and evaluate the arguments posed (RI.9-10.8). This unit will take approximately ten instructional days with a final assessment regarding the analysis and metacognitive evaluation of meaningful passages which unlock our understanding of this novel in consideration of its promotion of peace or endorsement of war.

Rationale

“I think a curse should rest on me – because I love this war. I know it’s smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment – and yet – I can’t help it – I enjoy every second of it.” Winston Churchill, letter to a friend, 1916

Appetites for Conflict

In her book, *Peace Education*, Noddings refers to a claim made by Francis Fukuyama which really stuck with me. Fukuyama asserts that “with the widespread embrace of liberal democracy, war between nations has become unlikely and with no more war, history itself would end.”³ Is this true? Without war, would we have history to write?

As a trafficker in literature, I cannot stray from thinking as an English Language Arts teacher. So, my first thought is that narrative writing, good narrative writing, always has conflict, something that shakes up our main character. We even define character by how they *handle* this moment. If the character comes out of this conflict and learns a lesson,

they are dynamic. If they do not, they are static. In terms of plot, conflict and it's resolving or lack of resolving, is the most important part of the story. When diagraming plot, not only is conflict central, but it's placement is the highest peak.

This got me thinking about how central war is in our human history and to our learning of it. I remember my favorite teacher in high school always telling his students that history is written by the victors. If this is true, then it is conflict which defines history and not peace. Why is it that people generally prefer times of peace, and yet are more likely to discuss at length times of conflict and war? Why are we so drawn to conflict? Is it because war has become so centralized that it has become part of our programming?

Noddings also denotes the roles in which philosophy and religion have played in support of war. For classical philosophers, "war was a part of nature and ... [was] the engine of a state's or nation's success...Empires [were] built on victories in war, and the 'manliness' of a society [was] judged by the courage and stamina of its military."⁴ While Christianity taught that peace was the goal, it was to be reconciled through militaristic means "to bring all peoples under the banner of Christianity."⁵

In modern culture, "sports are staged like battles, and huge audiences look forward to the violence of football, soccer, and boxing," while simultaneously becoming upset for a player when he "suffers actual damage."⁶ This concept also connects with games that young children play like cops and robbers or cowboys and Indians. Toys which support this kind of play are imitations of real-world weapons. And at some schools, fencing, an act whose original intent was to kill, is taught to students. What message are we sending to our youth? *War is bad, war is awful, but isn't it fun to play?* And, ashamedly, I have to side with Churchill in this matter. *War is fascinating.*

Not only is the act or the imitation of war central in our history, as Noddings suggests, so is the language and discourse of war.⁷ In her argument Noddings adds how "we invoke the word *war* to emphasize seriousness of purpose...hav[ing] launched wars on drugs, on poverty, and on terrorism."⁸ We often justify fighting to protect equality, rights, freedom, and justice.⁹ It holds that we are equally shaped by our culture of war as much as we in turn shape it.

Real-World Virtual Training in the Military

The virtual military training seen in *Ender's Game* is not far off base. In a 2006 article in the *Washington Post*, Jose Antonio Vargas reports on the technological advancements in training soldiers for war. Vargas interviewed a 29 year old sergeant who claimed that his

most recent shot fired against a human enemy “felt like [he] was in a big video game.”¹⁰ It’s no shock when we see children and adults playing military games like *Halo*. The U.S Army even consulted on a military-themed video game called “Full Spectrum Warrior.”¹¹ According to the U.S. Military, “computer simulations [videogames]...have transformed the way the United States military fights wars, as well as soldiers’ ways of killing.”¹²

The aim of this unit is to evaluate the centrality of war in history through an analysis of Orson Scott Card’s *Ender’s Game*.

Teaching *Ender’s Game*

Ender’s Game is a science-fiction novel set in an unknown future in which we have been invaded by an alien force, known as the Buggers, and have since been training soldiers for decades in preparation for another enemy attack. In this America, the government has limited parents to having only two children, unless given permission from the government to have a third child. All children are given monitors, little mechanisms which are embedded into the back of the neck to observe personal interactions, intimate thoughts, and feelings. There is no privacy for a child in this world, which fine because these monitors also protect a child from bullying and being bullied. What’s wrong with that? Everything. The aim of the government in this matter is that of observing the candidacy of a strong soldier—a child soldier. The monitors are removed, painfully, from the children around the age of three.

Our story begins with Andrew Wiggin, a third child who is getting his monitor removed at the age of six. Two things should immediately stand out here. One being that the main character is the third child, indicating that his creation and birth was sanctioned by the government; and two, that Andrew has lived with his monitor for three years longer than other children. Instantly, he is set up as *other*, different, a boy that other children would claim is *not one of us*. The estrangement and isolation is critical here.

Once his monitor is removed, the colonel of the battle school for training child soldiers comes to Andrew’s home and tells his family that Andrew is a prime candidate for battle school. Leaving his family behind, Andrew goes with Colonel Graff to battle school which is located in outer space.

Here, Andrew is estranged and isolated, just like he was on earth, only this time, it is the teachers who engineer his isolation, with the hope that he will become a stronger and more creative soldier. In Battle School, students whose approximate ages are six to thirteen participate in simulations of battles both as a form of study and in their personal

free time through teacher-manipulated video games. Spoiler alert: while the children believe that these *games* are simulations which prepare them as soldiers to fight in an eminent war, the fact is that these *games* aren't simulations at all. The children are actually calling the shots and fighting in a virtual war with real physical repercussions.

While my focus in this unit will be on the centrality of war as presented in the novel, in his introduction to *Ender's Game*, Card elucidates a few other studies which I think are worth mentioning. At Appalachian State University, the interdisciplinary studies program uses *Ender's Game* to open discourse on critical thinking, problem-solving, and the creation of personal identity, while the Marines use the novel to study leadership.¹³

Teaching Science-Fiction

What can we learn from Science-Fiction? According to Card and his science-fiction hero, Asimov—everything. Card's love affair with science-fiction began with Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy. It was in these novels that Asimov explored essential questions of the future of humanity—would things change or remain the same?¹⁴ Technology evolves, though we may not. We will still deceive.

In his introduction to *Ender's Game*, Card writes about why we as readers love fiction:

I think that most of us...read stories that we know are not "true" because we're hungry for another kind of truth: The mythic truth about human nature in general, the particular truth about those life-communities that define our own identity, and the most specific truth of all: our own self-story. Fiction, because it is not about somebody who actually lived in the real world, always has the possibility of being about our self.¹⁵

Card suggests that we read the character of Andrew "Ender" Wiggin as one whose struggles and feelings are not entirely dissimilar to our own as children, even though, it's unlikely that we were sent to become a child soldier in outer space.

Strategies

Seminar

In this unit I will use the seminar method to promote a student-centered discussion which will be separated into waves. The first wave of discussion will be made up of a heterogeneous combination of students who are good at initiating conversation and those who are historically quiet and are less likely to participate. Giving them the opportunity

to present their ideas first encourages them to speak up and be less likely to feel like their ideas are lack-luster. While the first group of students are discussing the topic, the second group of students are reading an article about the topic in preparation for the second wave of discussion. Placing your more insightful students in the second group would be beneficial here. The goal of the second wave is to bring new insights to the seminar topic by synthesizing the ideas in the article with the major concepts in the novel. To have an effective seminar, the groups must be selected with care. Taking the class roster, place students into three categories: Talkative, Moderate, and Quiet Listeners. Using your discretion and your newly categorized student roster, separate these students into two groups with the aforementioned consideration of students' ability. For this strategy, desks should be moved in a way that promotes discussion.

Turn and Talk

After reading a passage either as a class or individually, I will have students turn towards one another and discuss things that stand out to them. I encourage them to read closely and look for patterns, diction and foreign vocabulary, syntax and style, as well as figurative language. During a Turn and Talk, I will use music to act as a timer. When the music stops, attention goes to the whole group. Turn and Talk can be used a number of ways: to discuss a response to a teacher-led focus question, to share stand outs, moments of clarity or confusions about a text.

Exit Tickets

I have my students submit Exit Tickets on their way out of the classroom and these tickets influence my lesson the next day. Students receive them in the last five minutes of class and the tickets pertain to a topic or objective that we discussed that day.

Talking to the Text

Talking to the Text can take a few forms, annotation among them. The form that I will focus on in this unit is an Evidence and Interpretation Notetaker. Here, students will be asked to keep a double entry journal with a focus question to guide their reading. On the left side (Evidence), they will write text which they believe to connect to the focus question, while on the right side (Interpretation) they will respond. Because reading is a process, talking to the text, which happens during reading, is a process. With this in mind, I often encourage students to formulate their responses as a text-dependent question. In this way, students can be aware of their thinking and show it to others. This also helps

“students feel safer and better prepared to discuss texts and their reading process after having had time to record their thoughts on paper.”¹⁶

Text Mapping

Text Mapping is an excellent way for students to plot out major ideas, shifts, conflicts, actions of the plot, characterizations, figurative language, and literary elements in a graphic representation. This can be done throughout an entire work or over the course of a few chapters. When the aforementioned parts are plotted, students will then draw connections, linking one plotted point to another. For example, a student might be able to link a character’s thoughts to a major shift in the story. They will also use color and scale for emphasizing important points.

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is a great group activity which tasks each student with a specific and personal role in a reading activity. A student might be asked to clarify a point of confusion, make connections and find patterns, create questions for the group to consider, or summarize a text. In this unit, Reciprocal Teaching will be used to discuss key concepts in sections of the novel, however, this can be done throughout a novel study, allowing students to switch roles.¹⁷

Classroom Activities

Prior to First Day of Instruction on This Unit

Anticipatory Activities

Preparing for the Activities: In preparation for the first activity, you will need access to G. Rodriguez’s article “What Terrorists Want” for The Los Angeles Times. This is published online. If your classroom is one-to-one, the article need not be printed. Because I encourage my students to interact with the text, I will print mine out, allowing students to mark their thoughts on the same page as the piece of writing.

The second activity requires access to YouTube and a projector.

For the third activity, you will need to photocopy clean sections of text (*Ender’s Game*) for students to preview. The specific sections needed are the chapter openings, where Card reveals the perspective of the International Fleet (I.F.). Please use your discretion in this activity as it is important that you do not reveal too much. I have

provided suggestions indicating cuts I would make in chapters that might be too revealing.

Suggested Cuts: Because chapter seven begins with a major plot point, I would begin the section with the line “What matters is that he won the game that couldn’t be won.”¹⁸ Chapter nine begins with the conversation about Ender’s progress in the mind game. To maintain intrigue into the story, I would cut out the portions which reveal Peter Wiggins’s role in the mind game. Chapter twelve, highlights the I.F.’s concern for Ender’s safety in battle school. I would leave out the mentioning of Bonzo Madrid as Ender’s enemy.

Once the copies are made, cut and paste them to chart paper for a previewing Talk to the Text activity. This will be done in pairs, so copy accordingly.

Activity One: Open this activity by asking students to reflect on the relationship between performer and observer. In writing, they should consider which of the two agents have the power in the relationship, while as noting who has the illusion of power. After a few minutes of thoughtful process writing, have the class Turn and Talk, and hand out copies of “What Terrorists Want.” First, have the students preview the text.

- What predictions can be made from the title?
- What type of text is this?
- What language sticks out upon a cursory read?

Bring the previewing considerations to a whole class discussion. Then have students silently read and Talk to the Text. Allow as much time as needed for annotations and silent reading. After students have finished, ask for their reactions to the article.

- Were any of your predictions or considerations discussed in this article?
- In her novel, *Peace Education*, Nel Noddings questions our loyalty, claiming that we “are deeply moved by visual art, fiction, and firsthand accounts of destruction” and that we still “accept war as a means of resolving conflict or defending ourselves.”¹⁹ How does Rodriguez’s article attempt a resolution to Noddings’ claim?
- Do we have the strength to look away?
- Are we taking part in terrorism by watching videos of terrorist acts?

Have students consider Lorrie Goldensohn’s explanation of her concern with our fascination of horror:

One of the most intractable problems in reading and even writing antiwar texts, however, is that representing the horror of war is not the same thing as committing oneself to ceasing its practice. Horror is an amazingly elastic sensation. And what [is described] as the “scorching cautery of battle” becomes the next poet’s test of manhood; one soldier’s savage accusation becomes the next war’s recruiting romance.²⁰

- What does Goldensohn mean by “horror [being] an amazingly elastic sensation”?
- What is the duality in Goldensohn’s last line?
- Based on the last line, how does Goldensohn view the cause and effect relationship? Do you agree or disagree? Would Rodriguez agree?

Activity Two: Now that students have discussed the relationship between observers and those directly participating in war, turn the discussion to the centrality of war in history with an emphasis on sporting games. Have the class watch the PBS Idea Channel’s episode “Could Sports Ever Replace War?” which can be found in a search on YouTube. This episode should be considered in two parts. In the first part of this episode, we are confronted with a juvenile question: could sports ever replace war? The clip illustrates how various sporting events have increased diplomacy, but not enough to end war. In the second part, we compare and contrast sports and war. After viewing the video clip, have students Turn and Talk, focusing on differences between war and sports in the argument presented.

Direct the students’ attention back to the whole group for another video clip. This next clip is of former football player for the University of Tennessee, Kellen Winslow. In this short clip, which contains some mild language, Winslow grants a postgame interview with the press. Winslow is furious with the outcome of the game and illustrates this contempt by employing warlike language. After viewing the clip, ask students to Turn and Talk, juxtaposing the two clips. You might also suggest that postmodern thinkers believe that “discourse and violence are...often mutually exclusive.”²¹ Bring class back for a whole class discussion.

Activity Three: Distribute the passages from *Ender’s Game* for the students to preview and annotate in pairs. Students should consider the following: language which could have a double meaning; point of view and first impressions of characters, including those speaking and spoken of; patterns that can be discerned after reading multiple passages; as well as any predictions or hypotheses.

After ample time reading and Talking to the Text, bring pair conversations to the whole class. Discuss the aforementioned considerations and chart perspectives on the board while the class copies thoughts from the whole group onto their own paper. Tell the class that they will be tracking these perspectives as they read the novel. Encourage students to make note of passages that might help in reflecting on these perspectives, predictions, and questions. Close this activity with predictions regarding the title of the novel.

Outside Reading Tasks

Students will need to identify key allusions made in the novel and be prepared to discuss their impact on the novel as a whole. Students should be prepared to turn in a list of the following allusions with their significance both in the context of the novel and in history.

Suggested Allusions: The Warsaw Pact, Napoleon and Wellington, John Locke, Demosthenes, Caesar and Brutus, *The Shining*, Alexander the Great, Adolf Hitler, and Veni Vidi Vici, Marxist Theory of Cultural Hegemony.

Timeline for Chunking the Novel

Week One: Chapters 1-7, 96 pgs.

Week Two: Chapters 8-12, 102 pgs.

Week Three: Chapters 12-15 124 pgs.

Instructional Days

Days One and Two – Innocence and Culpability

Activity One: In her book, *Peace Education*, Nel Noddings notes a contradicting duality in regard to combat soldiers. Begin class with a consideration of the passage below.

American soldiers are told that they are fighting for freedom; yet in the military, they must give up most of their freedom and simply obey. They cannot decide when to eat, when or where to sleep, when to get up. In all of their previous life, they were told that it is wrong to kill; now they may march and chant ‘Kill, Kill, Kill!’ In school, they heard that ‘all men are created equal’; now they live in a rigid hierarchy, and they are not allowed to forget it. In peacetime, they are scorned or ignored for living like this; in wartime, they are honored for giving up the very thing they are said to be fighting for.²²

Project this passage on the whiteboard and illicit students' affective responses to this in a Turn and Talk. After a minute, direct students to focus on connections that can be made to Card's novel. Share out in a whole group discussion. Provide the following as a scaffold into a discussion of innocence and contradictions in *Ender's Game*.

- Consider the duality in Ender "reach[ing] up and [taking] Colonel Graff's hand and walk[ing] out of the door" as he heads off to Battle School.²³ How might Ender's exit constitute as a duality? What is he exiting? What is Card suggesting through this passage? Compare this to the opening of chapter two.
- One's home could be considered, as Jean Amery writes, "the land of one's childhood and youth."²⁴ Apply this definition of home to the novel and consider "that even before [Ender] left Earth that he first thought of it as a planet, like any other, [and one that was] not particularly his own."²⁵

In her book, *Peace Education*, Noddings suggests a duality in the loss of "one's original source of meaning."²⁶ She notes that when we see someone lose their purpose and meaning in life, as in the loss of childhood and youth, we are equally likely to hate war for causing the loss as we are to welcome war as a way to prevent it. Illicit students' affective responses to Noddings' claim.

In an online interview regarding his portrayal of children in *Ender's Game*, Card states:

The innocence of children comes from the fact that they do not have enough knowledge or understanding to grasp what the full consequences of their actions will be. Their causal vision is very near-sighted. They try for an immediate consequence, without considering what else might result from their action.²⁷

Have the class discuss Card's use of children as soldiers, paying special attention to their aforementioned deficiency in comprehension of causal relationships. How is this represented throughout the novel? Initiate a Turn and Talk, where each student should be responsible for identifying at least two relevant pieces of textual evidence that supports their claim. After ample time allowing the class to think in pairs, bring the focus back to the whole class to share out their evidentiary support and responses.

- Directionality and perspective play a large role in Ender's understanding of his Battle School surroundings. Consider the literal and figurative significance of the "weightlessness...caus[ing] disorientation, especially in children,

whose sense of direction isn't yet secure" and that "Ender was disoriented before he [even] left Earth's gravity."²⁸

- Regard Card's repetition in noting the soldiers' nakedness. While the nakedness is literal, it can also be seen figuratively. What might Card be suggesting?
- Card very deliberately tells the reader the ages of the children who are being trained as soldiers, highlighting their innocence as well as their culpability. What passages from the novel might provide support of this duality?

Activity Two: After a discussion of innocence in the novel, turn the focus to culpability. Noddings asserts that victims often become victimizers. Have the class consider whether or not victimization leads to repeat offenses in a Turn and Talk. When enough time has passed, bring their focus back to the novel. Have students work in pairs using an Evidence and Interpretation Notetaker to track Ender as both a victim and a victimizer to prepare for a class discussion. Consider how Ender defines his moral identity. Ender's identity has less to do with *who* he is, and more to do with who he is determined not to be—that is Peter.

Exit Ticket: Are we destined to repeat or mirror our past experiences? Using your Evidence and Interpretation Notetaker, answer this question in consideration of Ender.

Days Three and Four – Perspectives

Activity One: Begin class by having students extract passages which note Ender's perception of the world around him. Students might want to note the repetition of identifying the location of the enemy gate—down, Ender's "walking on a wall" and "climbing up the floor,"²⁹ or the previous lesson's consideration of the "weightlessness...caus[ing] disorientation...in children, whose sense of direction isn't yet secure."³⁰ The most notable of these might be the perception in the Battle Room. Here, gravity has been manipulated to be entirely different than that of the corridor. This is when Ender begins to shift the paradigm. By Ender recognizing the disregard of perceived direction, we come to see his ability to think critically. Engage the class in a discussion of the passages they found that highlight Ender's difference in understanding various vantage points. The following considerations could be used to prompt whole class discussion or a Turn and Talk.

- While we view Ender's epiphany as a feat in critical thought, could Card be suggesting more? What are some of the implications of the figurative meaning in Ender's new perspective?

After examining Ender's sense of directionality, bring the class to reflect individually on the passage in chapter two wherein Peter and Ender play Buggers and Astronauts:

He put on the mask. It closed him in like a hand pressed tight against his face. But this isn't how it feels to be a bugger, thought Ender. They don't wear this face like a mask, it *is* their face. On their home worlds, do the buggers put on human masks, and play? And what do they call us?³¹

During individual examination, students should Talk to the Text and note other passages in the novel, especially in the last chapter, that reflect similar concepts. Students might want to note name-calling such as *bugger-lover*, which by the end of the novel, will be true of Ender, as well as Ender's conversation with Dink about who the enemy really is.³² After ample time allowing for students to build connections, have students Turn and Talk and then come back for a whole class discussion.

In chapter three, Ender likens the footage he has seen of the Invasion to "children fighting with grown-ups,"³³ wherein, the buggers, who are able to move deftly, are the grown-ups. Have the class examine the relationship between adults and children in the novel, noting passages which show similar paradigm shifts. Examine the irony in the passage and consider that children are meant to learn from grown-ups and that Ender learns more from the buggers. Bring the students to a whole group discussion after ample time noting various connections.

Activity Two: When the class discussion comes to a slow-down, ask the class to consider point of view in *Ender's Game*, notably the inconsistencies, the shifts, and the way each chapter begins with the usually *unidentified* commanders of the International Fleet. Employ the Reciprocal Teaching strategy for this activity and prepare students to come back for a whole class discussion. Students examining shifts in point of view might want to consider what causes the shifts, particularly in relation to the shift in the last chapter of the novel. For those examining the inconsistencies in point of view, an evaluation of the effectiveness might be important. Lastly, in consideration of the voice of the government and military, students might want to note the role and function of the monitor.

Exit Ticket: Noddings suggests a shift in the paradigm when teaching war, elucidating that "the world needs critical education aimed at knowledge of both self and the groups to which one belongs."³⁴ How might this idea contribute to Ender's new perspective?

Homework: Write from the point of view of Stilson or Bonzo after they have victimized one of their classmates. How might either deal with the feelings of regret?

Days Five and Six – Manipulation

Activity One: Begin class with a 30 second clip from *Seinfeld*, wherein George Costanza reveals his view on lying: “It’s not a lie...if you believe it.” Then, have the class consider Immanuel Kant’s philosophy of lying. According to Kant, when one lies, “[the liar] fails to see [the lied to] as a person like [themselves],” rather the liar sees the lied to “as a thing, a means to an end,” and thus deems lying immoral.³⁵ In a quick-write, students should examine these views and how they are represented in the novel in preparation for a whole class discussion.

Making sure that the class is on the right track, prepare them for a more in depth examination of manipulation in the novel. Before beginning the Reciprocal Teaching method, ask the class to define the word manipulation. Some students might suggest that manipulation is deceitful and done by those in power, while others might view it as a basic form of changing the restrictions or abilities of a malleable object. Have the class dig deeper into the forms of manipulation in the novel, categorized by lies, games, and existential meaning. Clarify that the last category should take Ender’s existence into consideration. Group students into fours and have each student clarify his or her role in the Reciprocal Teaching method. Students should use an Evidence and Interpretation Notetaker to track their thoughts for this activity.

Suggested Passages and Considerations for Lies in *Ender’s Game*: Examine Ender’s comment that “lies [can be] more dependable than the truth.”³⁶ It might also be beneficial to consider Noddings:

In ordinary morality, it is wrong to steal; in war morality, one may steal food and appropriate property if one’s leaders order or allow it. In the first domain, it is wrong to lie or bear false witness; in the second, one would certainly not tell the enemy the truth, and one is almost bound to believe a host of falsehoods about the enemy and act on them.³⁷

Do we see this duality in the novel? If so, when and where? How does this advance the novel?

Suggested Passages and Considerations for Games in *Ender’s Game*: Bonzo and Ender argue over what Ender is allowed to do during free play. This results in Ender getting his way, only Ender’s free play is really neither *free* nor is it *play*. Examine the connotation of the word *game*. What is Ender’s Game? What other games exist in the novel?

Consider the Wiggin parents' debate over toy imitations of military weapons. While it bothered Ender's mother, his father asserted "that the war wouldn't go away just because [people] hid bugger masks and wouldn't let [their] kids play with make-believe laser guns. Better to play the war games, and have a better chance of surviving when the buggers came again."³⁸ In her chapter on hatred, Noddings suggests that one way to reduce hatred would be to "include the study of parenting in the curriculum....[because] the vast majority of our students will become parents."³⁹

Throughout the novel, Ender notes the changing of rules to the games, even admits to his final *simulation* as "a cheat,"⁴⁰ a pyrrhic victory. Examine the manipulation of rules in the novel and compare it to Graff comments about football.

Suggested Passages and Considerations for Existential Meaning in *Ender's Game*:
Consider Colonel Graff's discussion with Ender about humanity serving as tools.⁴¹ How is this passage a reflection of the whole? Compare this to Mazer Rackham's view of humanity.⁴² Note the reason for Ender's existence as a *Third* and locate other mentions of threes, for instance he carried out the Third Invasion which, according to Mazer Rackham, could not have been done by anyone else. Rackham claims that "it's what [Ender] [was] born for."⁴³ Consider Ender's moral identity and that his existence was sanctioned. How might being a *Third* count as a form of manipulation? How does it isolate him? Examine the role of isolation as a form of manipulation.

Lastly, consider Ender's moral betrayal. Reflect on Noddings claim of the contradicting moralities among soldiers. She continues with consideration of soldier's forced betrayal of the first domain morality:

Sometimes the sense of betrayal was directed at officers and the system that treated enlisted men unfairly: incompetence that caused unnecessary deaths, taking credit and medals for heroic acts done by others, meting out punishment for disagreeing with authority. But there was also a sense that the whole system had betrayed their moral beliefs and coerced them, in turn, to betray their own moral identity.⁴⁴

Tie in Noddings conclusion with Ender's state of mind after Mazer Rackham reveals that Ender was not playing a game. Specifically examine Ender "dodging their congratulations, ignoring their hands, their words, their rejoicing" and "strip[ing] off his clothes" before climbing into bed and sleeping.⁴⁵ Having discussed nudity as a motif, examine this instance. Is this innocence or shame? This might also be a Biblical tie to Adam and Eve. Finally, re-examine the big reveal in chapter fourteen.

Exit Ticket: Consider that Mazer Rackham congratulates Ender for “[making] the hard choice” by “end[ing] them or end[ing] [humanity].”⁴⁶ Where does the duality lie in this statement? Is there room for agency in manipulation?

Homework: Was Colonel Hyrum Graff’s treatment of Ender humane? Reflect on Graff’s role in the manipulation of Ender and consider that not all forms of manipulation are bad. Come to class prepared with several pieces of textual evidence that supports both claims.

Day Six – Seminar on the Colonel Graff’s Treatment of Ender

Preparing for the Activity: Today’s preparation is partially done with the students’ completion of the previous lesson’s homework. For consideration of seminar group organization, see Seminar in the Strategies section of this unit. The text that the second group will be reading is from *Ender’s Game and Philosophy: Genocide is Child’s Play*, Don Fallis’ chapter entitled, “They’re Screwing Around with Us!”⁴⁷

Activity One: Begin class by reflecting on the previous lesson’s consideration of Colonel Graff’s conversation with Ender about humanity serving as tools. In writing, students should re-examine Graff’s notion with the context of Day Five’s homework. Students should also take into account how this passage fits into the pattern of the novel as a whole.

Activity Two: Before beginning the seminar, set and discuss seminar norms. This should be expectations of the whole group as well as the individual with consideration of social and academic behavior, as well as unbiased critical thought. Allow time for questions about the norms and procedures to ensure that the process will run smoothly and respectfully. After discussion and clarification, begin the seminar. The first group should take approximately half of the time remaining in class, leaving the last half for the second group’s discussion.

Homework: Which point made in the seminar was most convincing? Why?

Day Seven and Eight – Symbolism in the Mind Game

Preparation for Activities: For the first portion of activity one, you will need a DVD of the film adaptation of *Ender’s Game*. As for the second portion of activity one, in which students create a Text Map, you will need markers, color pencils, and crayons as well as chart paper that is roughly the size of a poster. The second activity takes a look into Andrew “Ender” Wiggin, with special attention to the nickname, Ender. In this discussion, the class should consider what Ender is actually putting an end to as well as what he is beginning in the end of the novel—a new world religion. It might be important to note that Card is a devout Mormon, and some critics believe his depiction of Ender is

akin to Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism. Discussing this might offer a new perspective on the novel and the character of Ender, and it might even be interesting to consider Card's construction of Ender as a way to manipulate the reader. A discussion on religion might be a difficult one to have in the classroom, however, it is important that we consider its influence on conflict if we truly desire to be educators for peace. It is also important that dogmatism not get in the way of rational education. If this portion of activity two is too uncomfortable, albeit for you, your students, or a combination of both, some of the more problematic and ethical considerations can be skipped over without losing true understanding of the novel. Only you know the maturity of your students. Teachers should still highlight the peace found at the end of the novel.

Activity One: Begin class with an examination of the mind game using clips from the film adaptation of *Ender's Game*. Have students discuss the adaptations in a Turn and Talk in preparation for a whole class discussion. After highlighting some similarities and differences, direct the students back to the text. In pairs, have the class create a Text Map, locating the passages in the novel which discuss the mind game. These should include: the purpose of the game—which only the reader and the I.F. understand; moments Ender struggles with the giant's drinking game; the death of the giant; the children on the playground; Fairyland and the End of the World; Ender's reflection in the mirror and the snake; as well as Ender's revelation in the last chapter. Using these scenes, students will map out Ender's journey through the mind game, noting symbolism as well as relationships among the language, character, setting, mood, and plot. Discuss as a whole class.

Activity Two: What is the connotation of the nickname *Ender*? What is Ender ending? Answers to this will vary. In what way is the ending of the novel a beginning? Students ought to consider Ender's founding of a new world religion. In her introduction to her chapter on religion as a psychological factor that endorses war, Noddings asks her readers to consider whether religion promotes peace or encourages war.⁴⁸ This is a very complex question which will illicit complicated and varied responses. British philosopher Bertrand Russell asserts that "religion prevents our children from having a rational education...[and] prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war."⁴⁹ Illicit students' affective responses to Russell's claim in a Turn and Talk. Before bringing the class back together for a whole group discussion, remind students of classroom norms set up in the seminar on Day Six. Lead the class to a text-based discussion of the new-found religion in the last chapter of the novel. After examination, consider Noddings' aforementioned question. Religious considerations almost bookend the novel. In a Turn and Talk, have the students examine the functions of religion in the novel.

Homework: Albert Einstein once said that “any fool can know [something, but]...the point [was] to understand.” Consider Petra’s concern after losing the majority of her ships during the simulations against Mazer Rackham in the middle of chapter fourteen. Re-examine this passage,⁵⁰ noting specific text which foreshadows the reveal of the big lie.

Days Nine and Ten – Speaker for the Dead

Preparing for the Activity: This activity requires students to reflect on the meaning of the novel through discerning patterns and relationships among prominent passages which help develop the novel’s many themes. Because the best thought out essays do not come from a prompt, students in this activity will identify a single passage which cannot be ignored by an analytical reader. I like to call these *hinge moments*—when your understanding of a novel hinges on a single passage. Of course these passages will vary. Students need to consider the passage that sticks out to them the most, how it is a reflection of the whole, as well as other passages which help them unlock the meaning of the first passage. In other words, get students to consider how their understanding of this novel *hinges* on the moment they have identified. This also requires an element of metacognition, wherein I will ask students to explore and explain their process when regarding this novel. If thinking about thinking (metacognition) is new to your students, modeling is necessary.

Activity One: Begin the class with a reflection of Ender’s moment of understanding after having found the End of the World on the bugged planet in the final chapter of the novel. In a Turn and Talk, have the class consider Ender’s conversation with Valentine about understanding how to defeat the buggers, and in that moment of understanding, loving them.

- What is the relationship between these two passages?
- How do they contribute to the development of the theme?
- What other passages follow this pattern?

Activity Two: Explain to the class that they will write a personal essay based on their *hinge moment*. Model your process of discerning patterns and relationships in the novel, your metacognitive process, and respond to any questions for clarification on the task. The essay should have three parts: the *hinge moment*; two other passages which guide their understanding of the *hinge moment*; and their personal inquiries into each passage. Ultimately, students should consider whether or not their passage promotes peace or endorses conflict. This should be written in first person, highlighting their metacognitive process.

- What questions did you ask yourself?
- How did you come up with answers to those questions?

Final Assessment: Once students' ideas are constructed, have them prepare the major points of their essay as a lecture to give in front of the class.

Resources

Materials for Classroom Use

Reading Material

The reading materials for this unit are Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*, selected passages from Nel Noddings' *Peace Education*, a Q and A response from Orson Scott Card on the portrayal of children in *Ender's Game*, Don Fallis' chapter from *Ender's Game and Philosophy* entitled "They're Screwing Around with Us!" and the Los Angeles Times article by G. Rodriguez "What Terrorists Want."

Templates and Graphic Organizers

Students should create their own Evidence and Interpretation Notetakers to complete assignments throughout this novel study.

Classroom Materials

Teachers will need access to a projector or a document camera, internet, pens, pencils, markers, and chart paper.

Bibliography for Teachers and Students

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, 1985.

This is the novel study that I will use for this unit. While the language in this text is simple, the concepts and ethical dilemmas concerning child soldiers is more challenging.

Card, Orson Scott. "Hatrack River – The Official Web Site of Orson Scott Card."
Hatrack River Enterprises. August 2, 2000. Accessed September 23, 2015.
<http://www.hatrack.com/research/questions/q0053.shtml#answer>

This website might be really great to consult for all considerations of *Ender's Game*. This online source poses questions about the novel and the series with responses provided by Orson Scott Card.

Fallis, Don. "They're Screwing Around with Us!" in *Ender's Game and Philosophy: Genocide is Child's Play*, edited by D. E. Wittkower and Lucinda Rush, 107 – 114. Chicago: Open Court, 2013.

This is a collection of analysis completed by several different authors. Major topics include in depth looks at the rules of engagement, minds and bodies, who Ender really is, deceptions, child development, and existential considerations for *Ender's Game*.

Noddings, Nel. *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

This informational text was the basis of our seminar discussions, providing a detailed look into the psychological factors that endorse war. The aim of this book is to encourage educators to teach peace.

Schoenbach, Ruth, Cynthia Greenleaf and Lynn Murphy. *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Reading for Understanding is a book of best teaching practices. The goal of this text is to encourage teaching practices that help students take control of their literacy through metacognition. It includes real world teaching examples—even classroom missteps, downloadable activities, and rubrics for grading.

Rodriguez, G. "What Terrorists Want." Los Angeles Times. December 8, 2008. Accessed November 16, 2015. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/la-oe-rodriguez8-2008dec08-column.html>.

This article poses the theory that observers of acts of terrorism are encouraging further terrorist action. The language in this article is simplistic enough for lower level students, however the challenge to this text lies in the presentation of its ideas.

Vargas, Jose Antonio. "Virtual Reality Prepares Soldiers for Real War." Washington Post. February 14, 2006. Accessed September 23, 2015.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302437.html>.

This short article provides a look into the relationship between war and video or computer games. It includes an interview with a combat soldier.

Appendix 1: Implementing Common Core Standards

RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

This unit requires students to dig into the text and support their written and spoken claims with textual evidence.

RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

The aim of this unit is for students to be able to track the advancement of theme through close analysis. This unit is separated in a way that helps students focus on one major concept every couple of days, thus allowing students to understand how key passages shape a narrative's theme.

RL.9-10.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

By the end of this unit, students should be able to consider the centrality of war in our history through examination of the denotative and various connotative meanings of the word "game."

RI.9-10.8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

Throughout this unit, students will read selected passages from Nel Noddings *Peace Education* and critical analysis of manipulation in *Ender's Game*. Students will examine these texts and discuss the perspective of the author and whether or not the author's presentation of arguments is valid.

¹ Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy, *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 109.

² Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31.

³ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

⁴ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 10.

⁵ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11.

⁶ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11.

⁷ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

⁸ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

⁹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

¹⁰ Jose Antonio Vargas, "Virtual Reality Prepares Soldiers for Real War," *Washington Post* (2006), accessed September 23, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302437.html>.

¹¹ Jose Antonio Vargas, "Virtual Reality Prepares Soldiers for Real War," *Washington Post* (2006), accessed September 23, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302437.html>.

¹² Jose Antonio Vargas, "Virtual Reality Prepares Soldiers for Real War," *Washington Post* (2006), accessed September 23, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302437.html>.

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- ¹³ Orson Scott Card, *Introduction to Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), xxv.
- ¹⁴ Orson Scott Card, *Introduction to Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), xii.
- ¹⁵ Orson Scott Card, *Introduction to Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), xxiv-xxv.
- ¹⁶ Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy, *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 109.
- ¹⁷ Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy, *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 228.
- ¹⁸ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 66.
- ¹⁹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31.
- ²⁰ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36.
- ²¹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.
- ²² Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33.
- ²³ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 26.
- ²⁴ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 138.
- ²⁵ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 30.
- ²⁶ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 138.

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- ²⁷ Orson Scott Card, “Hatrack River – The Official Web Site of Orson Scott Card,” *Hatrack River Enterprises*, August 2, 2000, <http://www.hatrack.com/research/questions/q0053.shtml#answer>
- ²⁸ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 28.
- ²⁹ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 29.
- ³⁰ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 28.
- ³¹ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 11.
- ³² Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 108.
- ³³ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 25.
- ³⁴ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 76.
- ³⁵ Randall M. Jenson, “The Lying Game,” in *Ender’s Game and Philosophy: War is Child’s Play 2013*, ed. D. E. Wittkower and Lucinda Rush (Chicago: Open Court, 2013), 118.
- ³⁶ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 2.
- ³⁷ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17.
- ³⁸ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 11.
- ³⁹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 81.
- ⁴⁰ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 296.
- ⁴¹ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 35.
- ⁴² Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 277.
- ⁴³ Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 298.
- ⁴⁴ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 35.

⁴⁵ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 297.

⁴⁶ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 296.

⁴⁷ Don Fallis, "They're Screwing Around with Us!" in *Ender's Game and Philosophy: War is Child's Play 2013*, ed. D. E. Wittkower and Lucinda Rush (Chicago: Open Court, 2013), 107 – 114.

⁴⁸ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 82.

⁴⁹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 93.

⁵⁰ Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC), 285.