

**Choosing and Using Literature for
the Middle School Honors, or
Gifted Language Arts Classroom
32nd Day of Reading, 2008**

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Our vision for 21st Century Learning is to Make Every Student

From: Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- A critical thinker
- A problem solver
- An innovator
- An effective communicator
- An effective collaborator
- A self-directed learner
- Information and media literate
- Globally aware
- Civically engaged
- Financially and economically literate

Characteristics of Y.A. Literature

Young Adult Literature :

- **Has characters and issues young readers can identify with; those issues and characters are treated in a way the does not invalidate, minimize or devalue them.**
- **Is framed in language that young readers can understand.**
- **Emphasizes plot above everything else.**
- **Is written for an audience of young adults.**

From: Books That Don't Bore'em, James Blasingame, 2007

Overview of Presentation

- **Attributes of the Gifted Reader (handout)**
- **Six Facets of Understanding (Power point)**
- **Big Ideas/Themes and Essential Questions (power point and handout)**
- **Overview of selected novels (handout)**
- **Thieves Strategy for “Unpacking” Textbooks (handout)**
- **Questions to Use with Fiction (handout)**



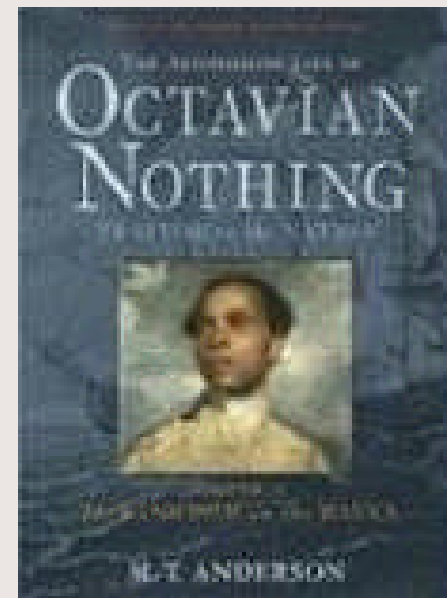
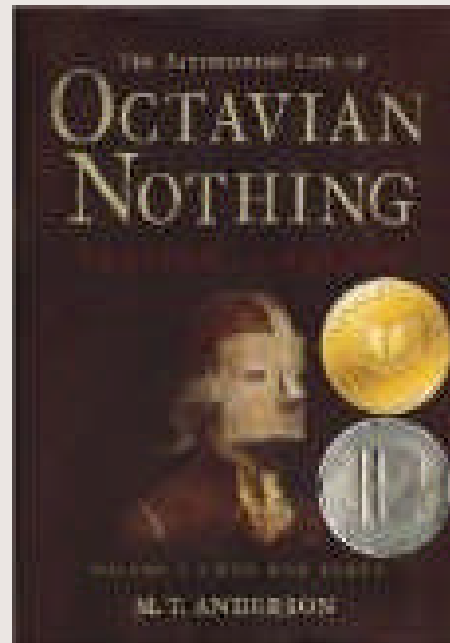
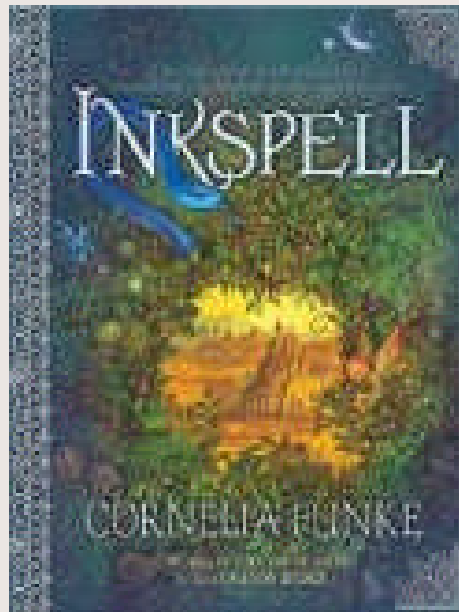
The Six Facets of Understanding

Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

- Facet #1, Explanation: Sophisticated and apt explanations and theories which provide knowledgeable and justified accounts of events actions and ideas.
- Facet #2, Interpretation: Narratives, translations, metaphors, images and artistry that provide meaning.
- **Facet #3, Application: Ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse contexts.**
- **Facet #4, Perspective: Critical and insightful points of view.**
- Facet #5, Empathy: The ability to get inside another person's feelings and their world view.
- Facet #6, Self Knowledge: Understanding pertaining to the accuracy of self-assessment and awareness of the bias in ones own understanding brought about by habitual ways of thinking, and unexamined beliefs. A learner with self knowledge understands what he/she does not understand.

Big Ideas and Essential Questions

- There are many choices of Big Ideas and Essential Questions that can be directly applied with your existing novels.



Big Ideas

- A Big Idea refers to transferable concepts, principles and theories that should serve as the focal point of curricula, instruction, and assessment. Big ideas help connect the discrete facts and skills. They are typically revealed through one or more the following forms: a *concept* (e.g. change) a *theme* (e.g. Man's inhumanity to man) an *issue* or *debate* (e.g., voter apathy or strength), a *theory* (e.g. Manifest Destiny), an *underlying assumption* (e.g. the stock markets are a rational investment, or *differing perspective* (e.g. terrorist vs. freedom fighter)

Essential Question

- Essential Questions reflect the most historically important issues, problems and debates in a field of study. For example, *Is history inevitably biased? What is a proof? OR, What makes a Child Gifted?: Is it nature or nurture?* Essential questions are open-ended with no single, correct answer. They are meant to stimulate inquiry, debate and further questions, and can be reexamined over time. They are designed to be though provoking to students, engaging them in sustained, focused inquires, culminating in meaningful conversations and reflective products.



Understanding the use of Big Ideas and Essential Questions

- Essential Questions reside at the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, (Bloom 1954). These questions require students to **EVALUATE** (make a thoughtful choice between options, based upon clearly stated criteria), to **SYNTHESIZE** (invent a new or different version) or to **ANALYZE** (develop a thorough and complex understanding through skillful questioning).


Essential Questions cont.

- Answers to essential questions are explored through in-depth reading and rich discussion while students construct their own answers and make their own meaning from the information they have gathered through personal and group work. These questions create insight.



Continuing with Complex Understanding

- This type of questioning and research, like good writing, should proceed over the course of time. Some of the information gathering should take place outside of formally outside of the normal school day and provide meaningful outside of the classroom as extended learning.



Continuing with Big Ideas and Essential Questions

- Eventually students could learn to design their own essential questions from modeled framework, but in most cases they will require several experiences with teacher generated and pre-designed questions before they can frame questions into a global thematic context.



Good Essential Questions have some Basic Criteria in Common

- They are open-ended and are apposed to simple or single right answers.
- They are deliberately thought-provoking, counterintuitive, and/or controversial
- They require students to draw upon content knowledge and personal experience
- They can be revisited throughout the unit to engage students in evolving dialogue and debate
- They lead to other essential question that are eventually posed by the students themselves.



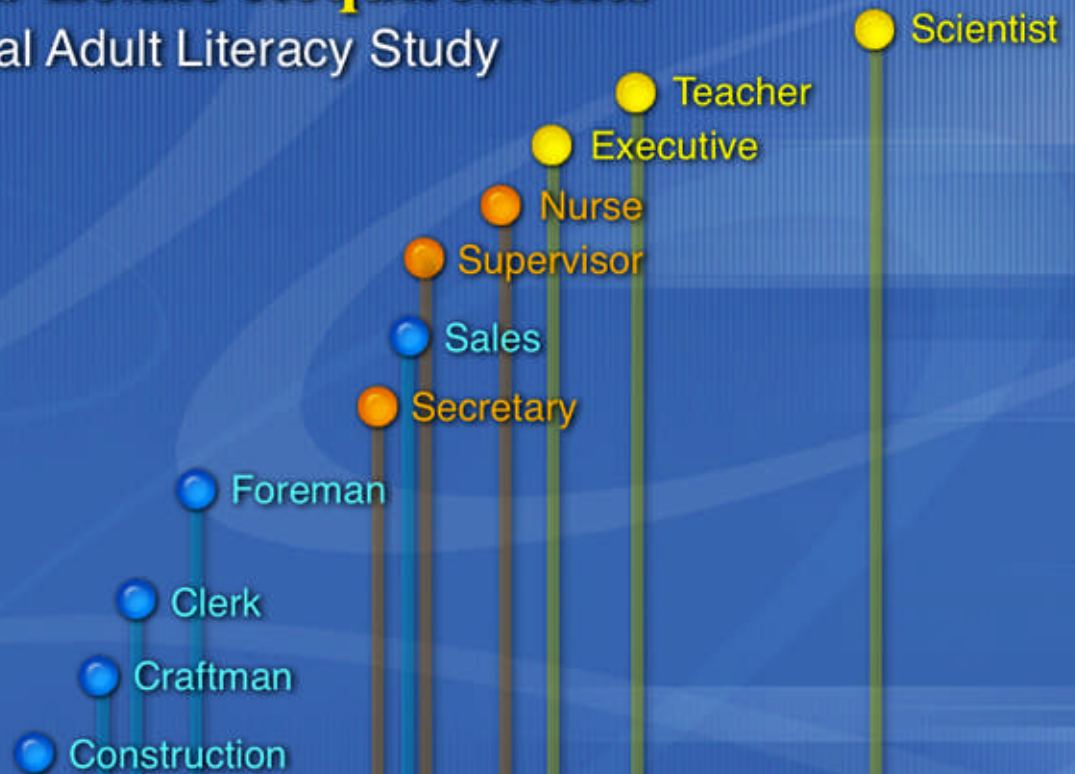
To that End

- Big Ideas and essential questions help to frame student inquiry and promote critical thinking as well as provide a helpful framework for organizing a unit of study using a multi-genre approach.
- The over arching goal is to promote open-ended higher level inquiry as students engage in exploration of the theme and the related novel, non fiction, informational or text study.



On-the Job Lexile Requirements

National Adult Literacy Study



Lexile Score