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Learning Social Skills and Problem Solving with Winnie-the-Pooh

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Introduction

Often I wonder if my third-grade students are prepared for the global world. Besides the core skills of reading, writing, and solving math problems, they must develop social skills such as communicating respectfully, thinking logically rather than emotionally, and developing values like respect and empathy. These skills are important for students to become real-life problem-solvers. The lack of social skills is evident in incidents from increased bullying in the schools to road rage at traffic signals. Our students need social skills to become problem-solvers in real life.

I have heard people say that children mirror the actions they see around them. What they read in books or watch on the television become reflected in their behaviors. Unfortunately, a majority of my students don't receive the support or structure outside of school that reinforces beneficial social skills and values, a fact that is evident from their peer-interactions and my anecdotal teacher observations. My goal through this unit is to help my students develop social skills especially respectful communication, logical thinking, and values like respect and empathy that will make them problem-solvers in their real life by analyzing the choices made by the characters and their points of view. To achieve these goals, I propose to use a popular children's classic, *Winnie-the-Pooh,* written by A.A. Milne.

Demographics

I teach third grade at Los Arboles Literacy and Technology Academy, one of the fourteen elementary schools in the Franklin McKinley School District. The demographics of my students are representative of the Seven Trees Community in the South Side of San Jose, California. It serves around 500 students from kindergarten to third grade. Of our families, 95.7% are socioeconomically disadvantaged; 70.6% of our students are identified as English Language Learners; and 86% are of Hispanic/Latino students. A majority of the parents work multiple jobs, and quite a few students belong to single-parent families. The students are usually taken care by either their grandparents or other relatives. A few of my students take care of themselves as well as their younger siblings, a situation that results in a lack of structure, social skills, and increased absences.

Since third grade is the senior class in our school, my students are usually seen as the role models for their younger peers. At the same time, they are being prepared to transition to fourth grade in another school with a new environment. Thus social skills and problem solving become even more important at this stage.

Rationale

Social skills are important to an individual's growth. They make us adept at dealing with life's challenges, however big or small. These skills are needed to "interact adaptively in our cultural environment."[1] A lack of social skills is evident through my students' need to be either popular or to be accepted. This lack is evident in our students throughout the school through reported incidents of bullying and/or making unwise choices.

To address this lack of social skills, our school employed a program run by volunteers from a private local high school; these volunteers came into the classrooms for fifteen minutes to talk about how to behave respectfully and treat others with respect, how to solve problems on the playground and in the class. These fifteen-minute problem solving sessions were not successful as they took away instructional time that we already were striving for, and they were discontinued. There are other programs especially designated to teach social skills, using picture books and certain read-aloud books that especially cater toward an understanding of these skills. In my experience, these books, though helpful, tend to be either too deliberate or come across as lecture-like. This situation inspired me to bring in classic imaginative literature to teach social skills that promote real-life problem-solving skills.

With the advent of Common Core, we have moved away from a set curriculum for English Language Arts, which has given us more liberty to build a curriculum that would cater to the needs of our students. This has provided me an opportunity to bring quality literature into my classroom. This is also possible because we follow Sobrato Early Academic Language, SEAL, "a comprehensive model of intensive, enriched language and literacy education designed for English language learners, starting in preschool and continuing through third grade."[2] Dr. Laurie Olsen, "a national expert in English language learner education,"[3] pioneered this model with the goal of having students be English proficient by third grade. English language development is integrated in science and social studies units, and the focus is on the use of powerful and complex language by the teachers while teaching these subjects. Our curriculum for English Language Arts is usually incorporated with science and/or social studies using the SEAL strategies. For this reason, this unit, while focusing on the social skills and problem-solving in real life, will also be integrated with the science unit on ecosystems: students will analyze how organisms depend on each other and their environment to survive.

For this unit, I selected the original, unabridged version of the book *Winnie-the-Pooh,* as it contains humorous stories about a character that is recognized by my students in the form of Disney productions and merchandise. This book consists of ten stories or chapters that can be read independently, as each has its own plot. When read together; they show growth of the characters. Though these stories appear to be silly on the surface, the story has a deeper meaning, which allows students to experience values like empathy, respect, and problem-solving skills through two main Common Core Standards: characters' points of view and their choices.

Pooh bear is the main inspiration for creating a curricular unit based on this piece of literature. Winnie frequently empathizes with his friends and solves problems in clever and sometimes silly ways in these

stories. *Winnie-the-Pooh* not only engages students in problem-solving activities in a relaxed atmosphere but also exposes them to real-life problems such as weather hazards and bee attacks.

By digging deep into the enchanted world of "The Hundred Acre Woods," my students will experience other cultures and time periods that are different from their own, which they are seldom able to do otherwise. I hope to nurture the ideas that other worlds exist, "full of imagination, curiosity, and humor" and that they "don't have to experience things the way [they] do now."[4] Though some critics might call this reading a form of escapism, I see it as an opportunity for children to connect with the characters, associate with them, and find ways to "cope with difficult situations."[5] They are able to "experience people, places, and circumstances that they may not be able to experience in real life. This allows children to develop a sense of empathy for other people and understand their own lives in more meaningful ways."[6]

Maxine Greene explains that children need literature to internalize knowledge about situations, for instance, how we treat others and how we feel when others treat us. A situation in a story becomes a part of the child's social imagination[7] as s/he thinks of the character and its choices. Children begin to think about the characters' situations as real-life situations and empathize with the characters.

Empathy seems like the missing link in today's competitive world, as is evident from the events taking place currently around us. Our interactions with others are preoccupied with our own mental spaces, and we seem to have become too self-centered, with little consideration for others. We empathize with others when we are able to think about their perspective and understand how they feel. "Empathy allows us to really connect with other people."[8] Milne clearly brings out this need for empathy through Eeyore's sentiment, "A little Consideration, a little Thought for Others, makes all the difference."[9] Throughout this book, Pooh shows empathy toward his friends and is always ready to solve their problems, no matter how challenging. In the fourth story, in which Eeyore is sad because he loses his tail, Pooh takes up the challenge of finding it: "Pooh felt that he ought to say something helpful, but didn't quite know what. So he decided to do something helpful."[10] Pooh's helpful nature makes him a great problem-solver. This character is "powerful to make choices that change other characters' lives."[11] Reading literature and having "thoughtful discussions facilitate critical thinking and meaningful interactions with both peers and texts."[12] Through the interactions among the characters, students understand the value of empathy and the meaning of friendship.

Pooh's actions teach students the value of perseverance and keeping our heads about us in times of "[a] Very Great Danger."[13] During the "Terrible Flood,"[14] Pooh does not let himself be overcome with emotion, nor does he panic. He analyzes the situation and thinks how he can solve the problem of reaching his friends to rescue them. He does not know how to swim but does not lose hope. He comes up with a solution; he uses his honey jar as a floatation device: "If a bottle can float, then a jar can float, and if a jar floats, I can sit on the top of it."[15]

Students analyze how characters can grow over the course of the story or series of stories; as Pooh progresses from being called a "Bear of Very Little Brain"[16] to being called the "Brain of Pooh,"[17] the title that he earns by using problem solving skills as he turns the umbrella to function as a boat and uses that to rescue Piglet during the "Terrible Flood."[18]

The playful language of this text gives it a humorous tone. Through the humorous conversations among the characters, students find out the importance of clear communication. For instance, Eeyore is usually gloomy and comes across as sad and pessimistic, as he complains about others being inconsiderate. Yet when Eeyore

shares his feelings with Pooh, he understands and helps him out. This is an important lesson for the students as one of the major steps in problem solving is to understand how we feel and then analyze the problem. When Owl says, "*issue* a reward*,*" Pooh misunderstands the word "issue" and thinks he is sneezing in the middle of a sentence and finds it rude. Students realize the importance of listening carefully: if a person doesn't listen, they need to be patient as they might just have a "small piece of fluff in their ear."[19] Thus communicating clearly is an important skill that students learn through the characters of this book.

Through these humorous tales, students gain an important concept about learning through our mistakes: it is okay to make mistakes as we constantly learn and grow. We should be open to other people's ideas and not put them down because of their mistakes. Carol Dweck termed this concept, "growth mindset." Students with a growth mindset take up challenges and difficult problems as an opportunity to learn and grow. They don't think about failure; they think of how they can learn.[20] Through this unit, students develop growth mindset by analyzing the choices made by Pooh, as is evident from Pooh's song: "Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie, A fish can't whistle and neither can I," to emphasize the fact that no one knows everything and that is alright; one should be open to new ideas and learning. By comparing Pooh and Eeyore, students realize the importance of trying out new things and not worrying about mistakes: they might not get a new concept the first time, but with patience, they will get it. They need to keep an open mindset as portrayed by Pooh, "I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?"[21]

Students often feel lonely and ignored. That creates a feeling of pessimism and a belief "that no one cares about them,"[22] which is quite similar to Eeyore's perspective. Students react in different ways in this situation: some act out to get attention, however negative; while others do anything their popular peers demand, to be accepted, however dangerous that might be. This gives rise to bullying. A lot of times, we think of bullying as people doing physical harm or saying mean things, but when someone has no friends and no one tries to make friends with that person, that is bullying as well: a feeling that causes anxiety and keeps students from academic achievement.

This is evident in the seventh story or chapter, in which we are introduced to Kanga and Baby Roo. Rabbit decides to kidnap Baby Roo, by replacing Piglet in Kanga's pouch. He thinks that "[Kanga and Roo] are Strange Animals… whom we have never heard of before!" and they should be scared away from the forest. Students might analyze Rabbit as a bully and Piglet as the person who always agrees because he wants to be accepted. This story offers an important message to the students about respect and empathy: it is a vice to judge other people by their appearance. Through the consequence that Piglet receives from Kanga, students realize another important message: others will treat them the way they treat others. Through Rabbit and Roo's friendship, they realize they can always learn from their mistakes.

The character's choices and decisions give students an insight into their own decision-making processes. According to the novelist Orson Scott Card, "One of the most potent devices for making a character important to the readers is to use the character's point of view."[23] M.H. Abrams defines the third-person point of view as someone outside the story who calls all the characters by name and uses of pronouns like "he," "she," or "they," whereas, in the first person point of view, the narrator uses the pronoun "I" and becomes a character in the story.[24]

Point of view sets the tone of story. Milne's writing craft, though unusual, is clever at inviting the reader into the action of the story. As he skips between the first-person and the third-person narrative, he introduces his reader to Pooh and Christopher Robin, who are the main characters of the stories. Once the stories begin, the narrator takes over the third-person, omniscient point of view as he goes in and out of the characters' minds.

This makes the characters come alive in the readers' minds, as they are able to experience a story from the perspective of a character and the narrator. This allows the students to have their own perspective on the situations in the stories. The students are able to distinguish their points of view based on the evidence in the text about the point of view presented by the character or the narrator. In fact, Milne took inspiration from people in his life to write these stories. Moreover, when he published these stories, critics like Humphrey Carpenter noted, "Don't we, indeed, recognize [the characters] in ourselves?"[25] This provides a way for the students to put themselves in the shoes of the character and distinguish their points of view from those of the characters.

My students relate to *Winnie-the-Pooh* in a variety of ways. These stories are about things that matter most to children, such as family, friends, tree houses, birthdays, adventures, expeditions, mysterious animals like Heffalumps.[26] Students make connections with the science concepts taught in class, such as bees making honey; bad weather and flood, as a part of natural disaster.

By making these connections with the characters and events in the story, students are able to infer meanings in the text that are not explicitly stated. For instance, when Pooh visits the Owl to help find Eeyore's tail, the author doesn't explicitly state that Owl was using the tail in the place of a bell pull; the students can make that inference through reading the signs outside Owl's house and looking at the illustrations.

"Children's conception of the world is rooted in the literature they read."[27] Therefore, through an imaginative text like *Winnie-the-Pooh,* students develop a higher level of thinking that in turn helps them go from factual to metacognitive knowledge and to apply the examples from the book to their daily lives.[28]

Cross-Curricular Connections

Winnie-the-Pooh can be adapted across the curriculum, depending on the age and the students' interest levels, in areas such as science, poetry, math, grammar, history and social studies. In third grade, this unit can be used to reinforce the concept of ecosystems and habitats in science. Organisms live together and depend on one another and their natural resources for survival. Animals face natural disasters through "Terrible Floods"[29] and through predators like, "Fierce [animals],"[30] like "Heffalumps."[31] They learn that bees are an important pollinator for the honey that is enjoyed by Pooh with such relish. Students can connect Pooh's efforts to get honey, which is too hard to get, with the current honey crisis termed "colony collapse,"[32] as a result of which honey is becoming too expensive and hard to get. Students form a parallel between the real animal behaviors and the animals of Hundred Acre Wood, when they explore the California bears' life cycle, their adaptations, and the impact that their environment can have on them.

Depending on the age and the interest level of the students, teachers can also introduce the historical significance of *Winnie-the-Pooh.* This character is based on a real American black bear, named Winnie, short for Winnipeg. During World War I, a veterinarian from the Canadian Army, Harry Colebourn, rescued the cub from a hunter at a train station. He named it Winnipeg after the hometown of his company. When their company was called to France, Colebourn had to leave Winnie at the London Zoo. The zookeepers trusted the gentle bear and let the children play with her. This is when Christopher Robin Milne, the author's son (and one of the main characters in *Winnie-the-Pooh*) met the real Winnie. He became so fond of the bear that he

renamed his teddy bear from Edward Bear to Winnie-the-Pooh.

Strategies

This unit is planned to be taught in the beginning of the second trimester in January, after the Christmas break. This timeline is essential for my students for a few reasons: since the learning strategies that are used in this unit have been practiced and have been internalized by the students by this time, they need little or fewer reinforcements; the class routine and structure and expectations have been set, and students are comfortable making mistakes and learning from them; they are learning about ecosystems and habitats in science; they learn how animals live together and depend on each other and their habitats for survival.

I employ a number of cooperative and group learning strategies in my class, to promote social skills and communication among my students. According to researchers like Slavin, Cooperative learning has improved student achievement, race relations, and in turn students' self-esteem.[33]

Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share is a commonly used cooperative learning strategy developed by Frank Lyman.[34] This strategy is used across all grade levels and schools. It has three stages to develop higher-order thinking. In the first stage, Think – the teacher encourages students to think about a given prompt, a guiding question, or an inquiry question for a few seconds. At this time, the teacher can also model thinking aloud to show what a thought process involves. In the second stage, Pair – they pair up with a partner and talk about their thoughts with each other. This partner sharing is helpful to reduce anxiety for the students before sharing with the class, and it also provides an opportunity to them to formulate their ideas in sentences. In the third stage, Share – they share their ideas with the whole class. I will be using this strategy throughout this unit.

Collaborative Conversation

Collaborative Conversation is a SEAL strategy designed to help students communicate with each other in a safe environment. Students talk with partners or in a group in a meaningful way, one that is relevant to the topic and practice the use of academic language.

As they are guided into higher-level thinking, they learn to use respectful language such as "excuse me," "I agree with you," "I disagree with you, because…," or "in my opinion," as well as using respectful body language while interacting with others, such as maintaining eye contact while actively listening to a person and nodding your head to agree or disagree while listening.

Numbered Heads Together

In this cooperative learning strategy,[35] students work in groups. Each student is assigned a number from one to the highest number in the group. In my class, I have students in groups of four, and I assign each student a number from one to four. The idea is for the students to work together by putting their "heads together" to come up with the solution to a guiding question.

Then I randomly select a Popsicle stick from four Popsicle sticks, which are numbered from one to four as well.

The student who has the same number as that Popsicle stick is assigned the role of "spokesperson" for his or her team. The goal is for each member of the group to contribute his or her ideas, and the spokesperson records those ideas and presents them to the whole class, ensuring the equity of voice.

Frontloading Vocabulary

To help my English Learners, I usually frontload challenging vocabulary before starting a lesson. I usually bring pictures and/or real objects that match the vocabulary word in the context of the story. Students have an opportunity to use the new vocabulary words in various settings through different subject areas and centers throughout the day as they internalize the new words.

Sentence Frames and Question Frames

Sentence and question frames are provided to the students, especially the English Language Learners, to help them frame their sentences to help their conversations flow. These sentence frames are differentiated in three levels to support the students' learning such as,

"Pooh wants to find Eeyore's tail because _____."

"Pooh decides _____, because_____."

"The reason Pooh _____."

These sentence frames are used to guide students' thought process while they are working individually or in groups.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers reinforce the background knowledge of the students, and they also help them visualize the information and internalize it. They help the students brainstorm new ideas before writing. Our school uses the graphic organizers developed by the company called, Thinking Maps.[36] These graphic organizers follow a consistent pattern and a protocol for use and are color coded for ease of distinction of different ideas. Each Thinking Map serves a different purpose. There are eight Organizers, and the students will use them for describing, comparing and contrasting, finding cause and effect of situations.

Freytag's Pyramid[37]

I use this model while teaching my students about the plot of a story. This model is useful because it visually shows them the beginning, middle, and end of a story. As the reader goes up the side of the pyramid, he or she can visually see the rising action in the plot and a need to solve a problem in the story.

Problem Solving Strategies

There are many problem-solving strategies, in education, as well as in life. Over the years researchers have refined these strategies to solve a problem logically. I teach my students to use six steps to solve a problem. This strategy includes: identifying a problem, analyzing the problem, generating potential solutions, selecting and planning a solution, implementing the solution, and evaluating the solution. These steps can be taken to solve problems in math, science, or real-life situations. For instance, when faced with the problem of trapping a Heffalump, what might the characters do? The students can go through these steps in dealing with a

situation in the story and use the real-life problem solving skills to find out a solution and then compare it to the Pooh's and Piglet's solution. The students don't have Heffalumps in their real life, but they do have personal or academic Heffalumps that they need to overcome.

Read Aloud

My students love listening to a story being read aloud to them. This is evident from their engagement during the read aloud and clapping at the end. When teachers read aloud, they lend their voice to the characters and are able to model expressive reading and academic language to the students. They can also model where to stop and pause, where to put stress, and where to change their voice. This makes reading engaging for the students and reinforces concepts about reading and language.

When students listen to a story being read aloud, they are able to imagine what the character is like, and that knowledge allows them to connect and associate with the characters more strongly. By listening to the stories, students will be able to visualize Piglet as "squeaky" and Eeyore as indeed "gloomy," and Pooh, naturally, a "growler."

I will read aloud two main sections of the book to model and reinforce the techniques of point of view and language. The "Introduction" is written in the first-person point of view through which the author introduces the main characters and his inspiration to write these stories. The introduction helps intrigue the students and make the stories almost magical in nature. The students will be wanting more at this time, asking about the bear, and most interestingly, "Was it a real bear?" This is my most cherished question because these stories are based on a real bear, but I reveal that fact much later when I tie this book with science, as I don't want to destroy the magic this early on. This also becomes the drum-roll moment for my students, as at this age, they are fascinated by nature and interesting facts. Therefore, I end the unit by reading aloud a heart-warming biographical picture book, *Winnie: The True Story of a Bear, Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh,* written by Sally M. Walker.

The first story, "Chapter I, In Which We Are Introduced to Winnie-the-Pooh And Some Bees, And The Stories Begin," makes a really interesting read-aloud as the narrator skips between first-person and third-person point of view. The words and phrases where the narrator is using first person point of view are italicized. Students follow along in their books and are visually able to see the change and highlight these changes in different colors.

Along with teacher read-aloud, I will be using two other types of read-aloud activities for this unit: dialogic read-aloud, and student read-aloud.

Dialogic Read Aloud

Dialogic Read Aloud is a part of the SEAL model. During this strategy, teacher reads a picture book that is related to a science and/or social studies theme that the students are working on. A story is read about three times over a course of a week, in which the teacher guides the student from explicit or text-dependent information to below-the-surface information that the students can analyze and synthesize by using techniques like inference and by asking and answering inquiry/guiding questions.

This activity takes about a week, so I will use this activity for the story that focuses mainly on social skills and problem solving: the seventh story, "Chapter VII, In Which Kanga and Roo Come to the Forest and Piglet Has a Bath."

The seventh story focuses intently on values like respect and empathy that promote social skills. In this story, Rabbit plots to kidnap Roo by replacing him with Piglet in Kanga's pouch. The reason he is doing this is to scare Kanga and Roo away from the forest, as they are such "Strange Animals"[38] who should not be allowed to stay in the forest. I have heard many times in my classroom or on the playground, "No one is playing with me…," or I see students ignoring others because they look different or are new to the school. Recently, at my school I decided to do a character-building activity when a group of girls started rumors about another girl just because she was new and a bit on the heavier side. By reading this story multiple times, I will be able to guide my students to think and look deeper than just what appears on the surface in their real life scenarios as well.

I will have students focus on the Rabbit's point of view about Kanga and Roo, Piglet's point of view about the situation that Rabbit has put him in, and the question of why Piglet agrees to this plot. Students will be able to distinguish their own points of view from that of Rabbit and Piglet, and also from that of the narrator. They will use the Think Pair Share strategy here to talk about their points of view, specifically how they differ or are same with those of the characters. In the third reading, the students will be guided to think about why they think the author wrote this particular story.

Student Read-Aloud: Readers' Theater

The students will be assigned the roles of the characters differentiated accordingly to their reading levels and interests. The teacher will assume the role of the narrator to model and make it easy for the students to distinguish between the character who is speaking and the narrator who is telling the story. The students are able to develop confidence by reading aloud in a safe environment. The story takes a dramatic turn and comes alive like a play. The students are able to lend their own voice to those of the characters. This makes the characters come to life in the students' minds. Not only is it easier to distinguish between their points of view, but also it becomes easy to understand the quotation marks and the difference between a direct speech and a narration.

This strategy is done only for certain essential stories that I want the students to focus on, stories that the students have heard repeatedly through the Dialogic Read-Aloud. This gives them a level of comfort to read the story as they internalize the language.

Dramatization/Role play

Readers' Theater can easily flow into dramatization and role-play. Bringing a story to life resonates with every child in the form of pretend play and dress–up. Dramatization makes the stories come alive and engages students in reading. This provides them with a better understanding of "point of view" and "voice" as they take up the characters' expression. Dramatizing a story can provide students a glimpse into the characters' traits and their personalities, their perspectives and their choices. The students are able to experience the consequences of their choices as they become a part of the dramatis personae. This will help them with inference and critical thinking. In an English learner class, it becomes most pertinent for the students to hear their voice and their language. These stories provide the students an opportunity to play with the language.

Close Reading

Close reading is defined as "a focused rereading of a text in which you go beyond a basic understanding of the text. It may involve a passage or key quotation from a text."[39] I. A. Richards, an English poet, critic and teacher, invented this strategy as a new way of reading poetry, though currently schools and teachers use this strategy to comprehend any text, prose or poetry. This method also paved way for New Criticism.

Inference is an important tool for problem solving and critical thinking. "Inferencing is said to be the engine of comprehension."[40] Close reading strategy provides tools to readers, such as inference, to dig deeper into a text.

In this strategy the students read a text at least three times. The first reading is on-the-surface reading that sets the purpose of reading and develops background knowledge depending on explicit information. In the second reading students read a complex portion of the text, focusing on the author's craft and text structure. The third reading takes the students deeper, requiring them to analyze and synthesize information.

Close reading helps us make "mindful interactions with the text, [that allow us to] create new concepts or internalize new information."[41]

Student Activities

This unit has a dual goal: students focus on social skills and apply these skills to become problem solvers in real life by analyzing the characters' points of view and distinguishing them from their own and by analyzing the choices made by the characters. Along with this goal, this unit is integrated into the science concept of ecosystems, specifically how animals depend upon one another and on their natural resources to survive.

These activities can be adapted across grade levels and across curriculum especially with the STEM components that consist of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Point of View

Recess Stories

To be able to comprehend the concept of point of view, students will begin with their own recess stories. Students will work in pairs for this activity. They will choose a friend they usually don't play with at recess. For this activity I will provide them ten-minute free recess time, so as to be able to monitor their activities. Using their collaborative skills, they will decide a recess activity or a game they want to play together.

They will write the account of their recess activity using a first-person and a third-person point of view. For instance, Partner A will write about their recess in first person's point of view, whereas Partner B will write about their recess in third person's point of view. They will be encouraged to add their feelings and their thoughts into their anecdotes as well.

They will compare and contrast their stories and analyze how different or alike their thinking process was, using a graphic organizer. This activity provides them a safe environment to practice the understanding of the concept of point of view and what it means to distinguish them from others.

Point of View Stories

After reading a story multiple times, students will rewrite that story in their own words. They will pick their favorite character from the story and rewrite the story from that character's point of view. For example, after reading the story "In Which Piglet Meets A Heffalump," students will rewrite the story from Pooh's point of

view, Piglet's point of view, or from the Heffalump's point of view.

They will extend this activity by distinguishing their point of view from that of the character's.

Students Catch a Heffalump

In the story "Chapter V, In Which Piglet Meets a Heffalump," Pooh and Piglet brainstorm ideas to build a "Cunning Trap"[42] to catch a heffalump. They both have different ideas but they come to a consensus, even though it is a silly and a humorous way to reach an agreement. This shows students the power of working together as a team.

In this activity students will work in their table groups using the "Numbered Heads Together" strategy to come up with a "Cunning Trap" to catch a heffalump. They will use a Thinking Map to describe what their trap might look like and feel like, using adjectives. This will allow them to think about what a successful trap should have to be able to catch an animal such as a heffalump, which is shown to be an elephant in the illustration.

Students will then build their trap if possible; if not, they can draw and explain why their trap is the strongest as they present it to the class. This trap will be tested using robotic toys or toy cars.

Character Portraits and Self Portraits

Students will work in their table groups to draw a character from the story. The guiding question would be similar to: "What choices did the character make to solve _____problem?" depending on the story we read. Students will make a character portrait showing the choices that the character makes and the steps s/he takes to solve a problem.

The teacher then provides a real-life problem that students are likely to face either at or outside school. For instance, "Josh and Sam were playing, when suddenly Eric came near the pair and said, 'No one is playing with me, they are being so inconsiderate.'" Teachers and students read the problem together chorally and use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to discuss what choice would the students make in that situation and what steps can they take to solve the problem. They will draw their self-portrait parallel to the character portrait, and write about the choices they can make and steps they can take to solve this problem.

Ecosystems

The language-art component is integrated through subject areas like science and social studies through the SEAL model. In science, the students at this time would be studying ecosystems. In this unit, the students analyze the lifecycles of different organisms and the effect of the environment on the habitat and the ecosystem of these organisms. Students at this time also do research about the California's grizzly bears and compare and contrast them to black bears, brown bears, and polar bears. They also analyze the importance of bees as pollinators in an environment.

To bring in the science and the informational aspect of *Winnie-the-Pooh,* I will read aloud a biographical picture book by Sally M. Walker, *Winnie: The True Story of a Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh*. Students will then compare and contrast the real and the fictional Winnies. The students will watch a video of the London Zoo where Winnie makes an appearance and is eating an orange.

To extend this concept, the students will write their own stories with their favorite toy as a main character and show what choices their character makes to solve a problem in their story.

Bees Are Important for Pooh

Students do research on bees as they work on their opinion writing passages. They will use the close reading strategy to comprehend an article, "Five Ways to Help Our Disappearing Bees,"[43] which talks about how "Colony Collapse" is affecting the bee population but we can save bees by using these five ways. Students understand that bees are important pollinators, and disappearing bees would cause decrease in pollination and lack of new plants and flowers and honey.

Students will draw a parallel with Pooh's honey problems, which is so hard for him to get and our current world problem, honey is too hard to get because of the "colony collapse." Students will imagine if Pooh were living with us and there was a shortage of honey because of the disappearing bees, how would he react to it. How might he solve this problem? Students will write an opinion passage picking one way that they think Pooh should do to increase the bee population.

Write your Own Pooh Adventure

Students will write their own adventures with Pooh to continue the stories. These stories will be made into an eBook using the Book Creator application on the iPad. They can either type directly into the iPad or take a picture of their written paper and upload into the Book Creator application. This application also has a voice feature that the students can use to dictate their story into. This way they can reinforce reading skills when they write; they will be able to hear their own voice reading it. This gives the students ownership of their work and a sense of pride in their work.

I hope that with this unit I am able to bring in the social skills and values that make my students productive and responsible citizens and ready for the global world. I hope with this unit, along with helping my students be respectful and responsible, I am able to provide a way for my students to enjoy classic literature and explore a world of imagination.

Annotated Bibliography

Abrams, M.H. and Geoffrey Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning,

2011. This is a great book for deepening our own knowledge about the various literary terms.

Baskind, Chris "5 ways to help our disappearing bees," *Mother Nature Network,* August

5, 2016, http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/5-ways-to-help-our-disappearing-bees I came across this article while my students were learning about the importance of the pollinators.

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Books, 1999. This book is about fiction writing, but the way the author presents the elements of writing, implies that to be a good writer, we need to know the elements of the fiction.

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Illustration Remix." *The Reading Teacher* 66, no. 8 (2013): 642-649. This article gives more information on close reading and explores some ideas on enagaging students.

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Change Lives. Henry Holt and Company, 2016. I found this book very enriching, especially the essay on the Hillside School which captured Jessica Zelenski teaching in tenth grade. It really brings out the intensity of literature in the lives of students.

Dweck, Carol. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Random House, 2006. Carol

Dweck is one of the leading researchers of motivation, she is the professor of Psychology at Stanford University, this book is a great resource for new ideas that promote growth in professional as well as personal life.

Greene, Maxine. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social*

Change. Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, San Francisco, CA., 1995. This is one of my favorite books, the author advocates that imagination in young children's education is vital for their social and emotional well being.

"I.A. Richards", *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed July 17, 2016. We use some

strategies so commonly that we seldom think about the person behind that strategy; encyclopedias usually have all the information that you want to find out. This is a great place to research on any other strategy in this unit as well.

Jacobs, Joanne. "Learning English." *Education Next* 16, no. 1 (2016): 38-45. This article

sums up the information about the intensive Sobrato Early Academic Language program in a very precise ad succinct way.

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Blog January 1, 2003, http://www.cdl.org/articles/social-skills-and-school. I came across this article while doing research on the importance of social skills in elementary grades. This article gives a deep insight about the effects of lack of social skills in young students' lives.

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Achievement." *Networks* 13, no. 2 (2011): 1-7. This article provides research on the use and effectiveness of Thinking Maps.

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Theory-Embedded Tools." *Educational Leadership* 45, no. 7 (1988): 18-24. This article is about using thinking tools and strategies that promote communication in the classroom.

Milne, A.A. and Ernest H. Shepard. *The World of Pooh: The Complete Winnie-the-Pooh*

and the House at Pooh Corner. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, Canada 1989, 1977. This is a great resource to get to know the

writing style of Milne and also the characters as the characters are the same in both the books, with the exception of Tigger, who is introduced in *The House at Pooh Corner*.

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York, 1988. This is the book that is being used in this unit.

Milne, Christopher. *The Enchanted Places*. New York, E.P. Dutton, 1975. This book is

written by Christopher Robin Milne, who was known as Christopher Robin in the Pooh stories. This book gives the information about how his toys and his imagination while he played with these toys inspired his father to write these stories.

Paul, R., and L. Elder. "The Thinkers Guide to the Nature and Functions of Critical and

Creative Thought." *The Critical Thinking Community.* Dillon Beach, California, 2005. http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/CCThink_6.12.08.pdf. This is an article that talks about using close reading to develop critical thinking skills.

Serafini, Frank, and Lindsey Moses. "The Roles of Children's Literature in the Primary

Grades." *The Reading Teacher* 67, no. 6(2014): 465-468. This research article touches on the core value of the importance of literature to foster imagination.

Slavin, Robert E, and Robert Cooper. "Improving Intergroup Relations: Lessons Learned

from Cooperative Learning Programs." *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 4 (winter99 1999): 647-663. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. This article talks about the importance of cooperative learning in diverse settings.

Sorensen, Marilou R., and Barbara A. Lehman. *Teaching with Children's Books: Paths to*

Literature-Based Instruction. Urbana, IL. National Council of Teachers of English, 1995. This book, talks about how literature provides a way to have thoughtful conversations that foster critical thinking skills.

Thwaite, Ann. *A. A. Milne: His Life*. London. Pan Macmillan, 2014. This

is A.A. Milne's biography. It gives an insight into the author's life and the evergreen characters. This book brings out the reasons why Milne started writing Pooh books and how they caught like wild fire; it also has information about the real bear and the real *Hundred Acre Wood*.

Thwaite, Ann. *The Brilliant Career of Winnie-the-Pooh: The story of A. A. Milne and His*

Writing for Children. London. Methuen, 1992. Another great resource with real pictures and newspaper articles from the 20th century when Milne was writing. It has other great resources listed within the book as well.

Watanabe, Kevin. "The Importance of Problem Solving," *The Huffington Post, Blog* May

24, 2009, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ken-watanabe/the-importance-of-problem_b_190514.html. This is a blog about problem solving and why we need it at all age levels.

Internet Resources

These are some websites and articles that are great resources in finding further information about content, research, and/or activities.

Common Core State Standards Initiative http://www.corestandards.org. This is an informational website with a lot of information available on Common Core.

The Sobrato Organization http://www.sobrato.com/sobrato-philanthropies/sobrato-family-foundation/seal/program-model/ This website provides all the necessary information and resources including videos about the SEAL program that is employed by our school.

Center for Teaching: Bloom's Taxonomy https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/ This is a resource to find more information about bloom's taxonomy and ideas related to the model.

Video of the real Winnie the Bear at Secrets of Nature Hold All www.britishpathe.com/video/secrets-of-nature-hold-all

The real Winnie makes a brief appearance in the movie about two minutes and forty-five seconds into the video, which is about nine minutes long.

Thinking Maps http://thinkingmaps.com/why-thinking-maps-2/ For more information and samples on Thinking Maps.

An Online Resource Guide to Freytag's Pyramid http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/an-online-resource-guide-to-freytags-pyramid A valuable resource for background information about Freytag's model.

Teacher Resources

A note on the text structure: some of the words are capitalized in *Winnie-the-Pooh,* which is to put stress on them or make them sound like a noun. For instance, in "Chapter 1", page eight in the book, "He sang a Complaining Song…" These instances are repeated throughout the book. For more historical information about the books as well as text structure, the following site might be helpful: *Children's Literature Classics* http://childliterature.net/childlit/toy/winnie.html

Teachers would require a copy of the text for themselves: *Winnie-the-Pooh,* by A.A. Milne.

Depending upon the interest level, the teacher can choose to read aloud the biographical picture book, *Winnie: The True Story of a Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh,* by Sally M. Walker.

Student Reading List

Students will be provided with an individual copy of the book, *Winnie-the-Pooh* by A.A. Milne.

Students can also read other related books for independent reading, such as *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear,* written by Lindsay Mattick.

Appendix: Implementing Third Grade ELA Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards

The goal of this unit is to help students develop social skills and problem-solving skills by analyzing the choices made by the characters and by distinguishing their points of view from those of the character and/or the narrator, therefore focusing on the following Reading Literature standards: R.L3.3: Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events and R.L. 3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters. *Winnie-the-Pooh* exposes the students to playful language, which ties in R.L 3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from non-literal language.

Students explore the information about real Winnie and about different types of bears, thus focusing on Reading Information Standards: R.I. 3.6: Distinguish their point of view from that of the author of a text,; and R.I. 3.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a third grade topic or subject area.

As students perform activities involving narratives and opinion pieces they focus on these writing standards: W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics of texts, supporting a point of view with reasons; and W3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details; and clear event sequences. In this unit, students explore and perform a research on the life cycle, adaptations, inherited traits, and ecosystem of bears and other animals in their environment, which focuses on W.3.7: Conduct short research project that build knowledge about a topic.

Through various cooperative-learning strategies involving partner and group work, students develop social skills, respectful interactions, and collaboration with peers bringing in Speaking and Listening Standards: SL.3.1 Engaged effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on great three topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and SL.3.3 Ask and answer questions about information from the speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

Students will design solutions to problems such as floods and disappearing bees; therefore, the unit connects to the following Next Generation Science Standards: 3-5-ETS1-2: Engineering design: Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem; 3-LS3-1: Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variation of these traits exists in a group of similar organisms; 3-LS3-2: Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment.

Notes

1. Candy Lawson, "Social Skills and School."
2. Joanne Jacobs, "Learning English." 40.
3. Ibid. 40
4. David Denby, qtd. Jessica Zelenski, *Lit Up,* 257.
5. Janice Carlisle, Yale National Initiative Seminar 2016.
6. Frank Serafini and Lindsey Moses, "The Roles of Children's Literature in the Primary Gardes" 466.
7. Greene, Maxine, *Releasing the Imagination.* 35
8. Candy Lawson, "Social Skills and School."
9. A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 122.
10. A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 47.
11. Orson Scott Card, *Elements of Fiction Writing- Characters & Viewpoint.* 83.
12. Frank Serafini and Lindsey Moses, "The Roles of Children's Literature in the Primary Gardes" 466
13. A.A. Milne, "Chapter IX, In Which Piglet is Entirely Surrounded by Water," *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 145.
14. Ibid., 145.
15. Ibid., 138.
16. Ibid., 144.
17. Ibid., 145.
18. Ibid., 145.
19. A. A. Milne, *The World of Winnie-the-Pooh,* 177.
20. Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The new psychology of success*, 3.
21. A.A. Milne, "Chapter X, In Which, Christopher Robin Gives Pooh a Party, and We Say Good-bye," *Winnie-the-Pooh* 160.
22. Candy Lawson, "Social Skills and School"
23. Orson Scott Card, *Elements of Fiction Writing- Characters & Viewpoint,* 85
24. M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham, *A glossary of literary terms*. 301
25. Ann Thwaite, qtd. Humphrey Carpenter, "A. A. Milne: His Life," 362
26. Ibid., 363.
27. Marilou R. Sorenson and Barbara A. Lehman, *Teaching with Children's Books,* xi.
28. Bloom's Taxonomy, https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/
29. A. A. Milne, "Chapter IX, In Which Piglet is Entirely Surrounded by Water," *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 145.
30. A. A. Milne, "Chapter V, In Which Piglet Meets a Heffalump," *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 67
31. Ibid., 56
32. Chris Baskind, "5 ways to help our disappearing bees," *Mother Nature Network,* August 5, 2016, http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/5-ways-to-help-our-disappearing-bees
33. Robert Slavin, "Improving Intergroup Relations: Lessons Learned from Cooperative Learning Strategies," Journal of Social Issues 648.
34. Lyman, "Cueing Thinking in the Classroom: The Promise of Theory Embedded Tools," 19.
35. Kagan, Spencer. "The structural approach to cooperative learning." *Educational leadership* 47, no. 4 (1989), 13.
36. Thinking Maps, http://thinkingmaps.com/why-thinking-maps-2/
37. Freytag's Pyramid, http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson904/MidPlotStructure.pdf
38. A. A. Milne, "Chapter VII, In Which Kanga and Baby Roo Come to the Forest, and Piglet Has a Bath," *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 92.
39. I. A. Richards, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*
40. Dalton, Bridget, qtd. Duffy, "Engaging children in close reading: Multimodal commentaries and illustration remix." *The Reading Teacher* 66, no. 8 (2013), 642.

41. R. Paul, and L. Elder, "The thinkers guide to the nature and functions of critical and creative thought," 38.

42. A. A. Milne, "Chapter V, In Which Piglet Meets a Heffalump," *Winnie-the-Pooh,* 58.

43. Chris Baskind, "5 ways to help our disappearing bees," *Mother Nature Network,* August 5, 2016,
    http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/5-ways-to-help-our-disappearing-bees