

A HEARTLINES PRODUCTION

INSIDE

Anna's
CLASSROOM

A MODEL FOR BEST PRACTICE — EDUCATOR'S STUDY GUIDE

INDIAN EDUCATION IN MONTANA

In 1972 the state of Montana made a unique promise to its citizenry.

This oath was conceived from an ideal of equity for all Montanans during the state's constitutional convention that same year. While there were no Indian convention delegates, many American Indian people provided testimony regarding the state's first inhabitants. Tribal leaders and Indian students addressed the convention delegates, requesting that they not overlook American Indians in their meetings. The result of such testimony and the integrity of the delegates took shape in the Montana State Constitution Article X: Section 1: *The state of Montana recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.*

This constitutional guarantee was interpreted by the state legislature with the passing of

the Indian Studies Law in 1973, requiring teachers working on or near a reservation to secure college credits or continuing education units in Native American Studies. At this time, Native American Studies departments were just beginning to develop and course offerings were limited. Numerous Indian educators traveled the state in an effort to give teachers some basic content background on Montana's twelve tribes. The mandate was met with resistance and the law was amended in 1979 changing the requirement to a suggestion.

Nineteen years later the state's constitutional language was revisited a second time. Legislators and educators reviewed transcripts from the original 1972 convention and crafted a bill to fulfill the promise made decades ago. House Bill 528 reinterpreted the intent and purpose of Article X: Section 1. The bill was passed, becoming Montana Code Annotated 20-1-501, now known as *Indian Education for All*.

MCA 20-1-501 (INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL)

20-1-501. Recognition of American Indian cultural heritage—legislative intent.

(1) It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature that in accordance with Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution: (a) every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner; and (b) every educational agency and all educational personnel will work cooperatively with Montana tribes or those tribes that are in close proximity, when providing instruction or when implementing an educational goal or adopting a rule related to the education of each Montana citizen, to include information specific to the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Montana Indian tribal groups and governments.

(3) It is also the intent of this part, predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, that educational personnel provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people.

ANNA'S JOURNEY

It was this Montana educational initiative that inspired educator Anna Baldwin to meet her obligation as a high school English teacher through the inclusion of Native American literature. Anna began her own journey learning about tribal history, Native American literature, and the Indian community that she lived in.

Anna's commitment does not end merely by learning content. Her professional growth is also dependent on her ability to teach the content. As an English teacher, she is concerned with the literacy of her students. As an educator, she understands that knowledge is not something given, rather it is something constructed. Anna combines all of these purposes in a single interdisciplinary unit. The power of her intention is portrayed in literacy rich opportunities, activities that require critical thinking, and the depth of content explored.

While building literacy with her students, Anna portrays best practice in teaching history by using primary sources. Rather than interpret specific events, Anna provides her students multiple sources to construct their own understanding of an historic event and the experiences of the people living through it. By engaging students in the lived experience of people, students develop a much deeper understanding of the historic events they are studying.

Anna then builds parallels between the historic fiction in the novel to the history of the students' own community. This best practice is known as place-based instruction. Places take on a deep context when understood through historic events. These strategies and others are captured in *Inside Anna's Classroom*.

Anna is intent on equipping her students for the world they will face today and tomorrow. She knows that local and global issues will demand critical thinking, creativity, integrity, and humanity. Harvard professor Tony Wagner, identified the following seven “survival skills” for careers, college, and citizenry in his book *The Global Achievement Gap*.¹

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
3. Agility and adaptability
4. Initiative and entrepreneurship
5. Effective oral and written communication
6. Accessing and analyzing information
7. Curiosity and imagination

REFLECTIONS

As you view the film, reflect on what Anna is asking her students to do. Note the skills that she is building through the various instructional elements. Attend to the interpersonal skills of the students during analysis and discussion activities. As a final reflection, note instructional strategies that build the skills Wagner identified.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Descriptions and instructions for all of the instructional strategies portrayed in the film are provided. Templates needed are included as well for teacher convenience. Resources Anna uses for the interdisciplinary unit are:

- Wind From an Enemy Sky* by D’Arcy McNickle
- The Lower Flathead River* by David Rockwell
- Place of the Falling Waters* film by Thompson Smith and Roy Bigcrane
- The 1855 Treaty of Hell Gate
- 1904 Flathead Allotment Act
- US Constitution

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge Mary Jo Swartley and Paragon Education Network (PEN). PEN is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming teaching to transform learning. PEN partners with schools to provide professional development that involves teachers and leaders in experiencing and analyzing practices and techniques they can immediately use in their classrooms and schools to stimulate intellectual curiosity, promote collaboration, and move students towards meeting targets.

Mary Jo Swartley served as an instructional coach for many teachers on the Flathead Indian Reservation, supporting the development of culturally relevant curriculum units. Her support, enthusiasm, and skill in mentoring teachers have made a difference for students and teachers. Mary Jo provided professional development to a cohort of teachers in Arlee over the course of several years. This film is in part due to the remarkable support she provided Anna and other teachers.

¹Wagner, Tony. *The Global Achievement Gap*. New York, NY, Basic Books. 2008.

FOUR-SQUARE [TEXT WORK]

DESCRIPTION

A four-square allows students' thinking processes and the construction of their knowledge to become visible. By asking students to record their thoughts as they view each of three or four artifacts, the teacher can help students become aware of their own cognition and their growing understanding of a concept or event.

MATERIALS

Three or four items (could be texts, maps, photos, quotes, video segments, or any combination)

A chart with four squares drawn large enough for students to write a short paragraph inside of each

PROCEDURE

1. Present the chart. Tell students they'll be writing their thoughts after you present each of the three or four items. The first square in the chart could include a sentence leader such as "At first I think..."
2. Show the first item to the students and direct them, after they've viewed and considered it, to write their thoughts in the first box. It is essential that they be able to write their ideas before the next item is presented.
3. Next, present the second item and ask them to write in the next square, which could include a sentence leader such as "Now I think..."
4. Sometimes it's helpful for students to discuss their thoughts about the first two items here, in partners or as a group. Doing so can clarify the topic or help them understand what others are thinking about it.
5. Continue with the third item, and if there is a fourth, the fourth item. You may choose three items only to allow the fourth square to be a summary or synthesis box, unless you have an alternate closing activity.

CONSIDERATIONS

Your activity may have a different outcome if you mix the media (a map, a photo, a text, a video) than if you select one medium and present progressive chunks (four maps showing changes over time, or four segments of a video).

Your activity will be affected by the order in which you present your items.

FOUR-SQUARE

NAME _____

AT FIRST I THINK

NOW I THINK

AND NOW I THINK

FINALLY

STICKY NOTE GRAPHICS [WORD WORK]

DESCRIPTION

This strategy involves manipulating words by putting them into categories, determining hierarchies, and finding synonyms. This supports and builds vocabulary development and critical thinking. Writing concept vocabulary on sticky notes and asking students to create a meaningful or symbolic graphic with them will enhance students' ability to think about these terms. It also provides a diagnostic tool for the teacher that can be used as a formative assessment.

MATERIALS

Sticky notes with concept vocabulary words already written on them (one set per group of three to four students)

Large chart paper, markers

PROCEDURE

1. Place the sticky notes on students' desks (one set per group, if your students are already placed in groups). Tell them they'll be looking at the words and deciding how they go together. What kind of graphic would help us understand these words? Do they go in a vertical line? Is it like a tree, with some words supporting the rest? Are they grouped in some other way?
2. Once students have grappled with the words by themselves (getting a dictionary, if needed) and have decided on a graphic, they should place their words on the chart paper. They can use markers to draw circles and arrows if they need to show relationships or label groups.
3. At the end of the period, have groups share their graphics with the rest of the class so everyone can see how different they turn out.

CONSIDERATIONS

You can see the level of understanding evidenced by students in this activity. Those who do not know the words will group them oddly or be unable to explain the graphic, while those who do will perceive patterns and demonstrate those clearly in their graphics.

After your lesson, you might have students do this again and place their original graphic side-by-side with the new one. They'll be able to see a visual representation of their own learning.

Consider allowing a question mark corner on the chart for words whose meaning and/or relationship is unclear to students. But on the second round (if you choose to do one) they must place the words somewhere, no question mark corner allowed.

SOCRATIC CIRCLE

DESCRIPTION

A Socratic circle (also called by alternate names, such as Socratic seminar and paideia) is an approach to discussion that allows students to build off each other's ideas and develop listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills.

MATERIALS

Questions prepared by the teacher, about three per group (usually there are two or three groups)

Questions can be on a grand-scale or specific to a text (What is the purpose of education? What aspects of the Hellgate Treaty have changed since 1855?)

PROCEDURE

1. Split the class into even groups of no more than eight students. If you have a large class, you can use three groups and have one group out of rotation at all times. For the purposes of this description, two groups will be used.
2. Place enough chairs for one group in a circle with ample space in the center. The inner circle sits on the floor, in the center. The outer circle sits in chairs.
3. The rules for the process are: stick to the question, use your text, your notes, your experiences, and your thoughts to support your ideas. The outer circle must not speak while the inner circle is discussing.
4. Allow eight to ten minutes for the inner circle. Participate as the teacher only to ask another question or re-focus them if necessary. Stay out of it completely, if possible.
5. After the inner circle is done, have the outer circle comment on the inner circle's successes. They should discuss how the inner circle functioned, not what they talked about. They might offer suggestions, comment on interruptions or silences, or focus on a specific aspect of listening/speaking skills that you have prepared them to watch for. Two to three minutes is sufficient for this discussion.
6. The groups then switch places for round two.

CONSIDERATIONS

Grading: you may wish to grade the Socratic circle based on participation, or you may decide that less pressure will lead to greater results.

Consider asking different questions of each group, or if one question provoked much discussion and there's clearly more to be said, allow the second group to pick up where the first group left off.

Consider never breaking the awkward silence. It is good for students to feel the pressure, to have to rescue themselves. If you rescue them, they will look to you for guidance, and that is the opposite of the Socratic premise.

Consider providing sentence starters such as "I agree because..." or "I disagree because..." or "Can you tell me more about..." These can feel contrived, but they are helpful if students will use them.

Please see this excellent text for more about Socratic circles: Copeland, Matt. *Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical and Creative Thinking in Middle and High School*. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse, 2005. Print.

MYSTERY PIECE [HOOK]

DESCRIPTION

A mystery piece is any artifact that arouses students' curiosity and requires collaboration. It is a mystery because you don't tell them the topic of the day's lesson first. The idea is to present something that will get them talking and thinking in such a way that will initiate those words and thoughts.

MATERIALS

A mystery piece: lines from a long quote or several related quotes, photos, pieces of a puzzle (large photo cut into pieces), a poem cut apart (they have to figure out how to re-assemble)

A form for capturing students' responses (optional)

PROCEDURE

1. Hand out the artifacts at the beginning of class, as students are entering the room if possible. If the procedure is not obvious, give them instructions, usually involving mingling. For example, photos at a group table will automatically prompt students to talk about them. A quote might require you to explain, "What do other students have?" "Can you guess the common theme?"
2. When students have finished talking about the artifacts (usually about ten minutes), facilitate a whole-group discussion about what they learned. Instead of telling them the topic, elicit their responses to the artifacts and then ask if they can guess the common theme or today's topic.

CONSIDERATIONS

You might use this as a preliminary activity and then collect the artifacts for later.

You might use this as the first step to an activity that you will prolong with more artifacts or a text to support the artifacts. In that case, you may want to use a form for capturing students' responses. A simple, useful form contains three columns labeled "What I notice," "What I wonder," and "What I think." For effective use of the form, you should model the use of it for students using at least one of the artifacts or the first paragraph of a text or whatever you're going to present to students.

THREE COLUMN CHART

NAME _____

TOPIC _____

WHAT I NOTICE

WHAT I WONDER

WHAT I THINK

DETERMINING IMPORTANCE [TEXT WORK]

DESCRIPTION

When students read nonfiction text, they often require strategies for making sense of it. Determining importance in a text is a skill that good readers use, often unconsciously. To make this skill visible to students, teach them to determine importance by using sticky notes (not highlighters) to indicate the most important ideas.

MATERIALS

Three to four sticky notes per student

Copies of the text they'll be reading (choose a short text, no more than five paragraphs, if possible)

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to students that determining importance is a skill they'll need for reading nonfiction text, especially text that is dense.
2. Hand out the sticky notes and the text. Then model what you want them to do on your overhead projector. (Plan this out ahead of time!) Read the first paragraph out loud. Decide ahead of time that something in the first paragraph seems important to you, explain your thinking out loud, and add a sticky note to that spot. Don't write on it.
3. Explain that we are using sticky notes because we can move them. We are using only four because otherwise, we will sticky note everything, and that is why we are not using a highlighter. Deciding whether one thing is more important than another is part of the thinking that we need to do.

CONSIDERATIONS

A good formative assessment for this text/activity would be to ask students to write the three lines they thought were most important and why.

Have students defend their choices with a partner or in front of the class if they are comfortable.

If you have them write, you can type up all the responses anonymously, copy them and hand them out the next day. Then use those copies to develop a student debate. Debating the most important points is worthwhile if your students are reading something like the Constitution.

POPCORN READ

[HOOK/TEXT WORK]

DESCRIPTION

A popcorn, or spirit read elicits the flavor of a piece before students have to read it in its entirety. By selecting words or short phrases from just a couple of paragraphs, students will be identifying language that spices the whole piece. This is a useful strategy for everything from nonfiction, government documents, and textbooks, to poetry, short story, and memoir.

MATERIALS

Copies of the text you want students to read

PROCEDURE

1. Students should skim the first couple of paragraphs (you select in advance how much). You don't want them reading it in depth and you don't want them taking too much time. Tell students to look for language that pops out at them—words that seem interesting or important, even if they don't know why.
2. Give directions for a popcorn read. Students say their selected words, phrases, etc., in popcorn fashion—that is, no particular order or pattern. Be sure to tell them it's okay if someone else says their word or phrase first—that just means it's an even more powerful word. Also, there is no discussion.
3. After the read, there is not much to say. You could facilitate a very brief discussion about the flavor of the piece—what do they think it will be about? What are its characteristics? Next, students can continue to read the piece.

CONSIDERATIONS

If you say only the beginning and the end, students will know when the popcorn read starts and stops. There won't be any awkward moments at the finish. Be sure to tell them you'll do this.

TEA PARTY

[HOOK]

DESCRIPTION

A tea party is a type of mystery piece or hook that is particularly focused on using textual clues and requires the entire class to mingle. The idea is to share pieces of a text (lines from a treaty or other government document, quotes from people who have experienced a common event, or lines from a poem work well). Each student has a slip of paper with some text and mingles with other students to try to discover the topic.

MATERIALS

A slip of paper for each student, ideally with something different on each slip. Specific references (such as a title of a government document or names of people that might “give it away”) should be removed.

PROCEDURE

1. Hand each student a slip of paper. Instruct students to mingle, to share what they have, compare information and try to decipher the topic by talking to others.
2. This activity usually lasts no more than ten minutes. After students have returned to their seats, facilitate a whole group discussion. What do they think the topic is? What kinds of lines did they have? Invite students to share their text so the whole class can hear it and hear the students’ ideas about it.

CONSIDERATIONS

Use the text slips as an introduction to the complete text, if that’s what you intend to study.

If you know the slips have subthemes, your whole-class discussion can focus on those: “Did anyone have a slip that suggested anger?”(yes...share out) “Did anyone have a slip that described despair?” (yes...share out)

KNOWLEDGE RATING [WORD WORK]

DESCRIPTION

A knowledge rating is a form that is used to capture and demonstrate students' development of knowledge about any set of items, such as concept vocabulary, events, or individuals. It is a chart that includes before and after sections, where students rate their knowledge of the set of items by marking "Know It," "Not Sure," or "Don't Know." It also contains a "Comments" line for each of the items where students can record a definition or thoughts.

MATERIALS

Knowledge Rating form with words/events/people filled in on the left side

PROCEDURE

1. Before beginning a lesson or unit, present the knowledge rating form. Instruct students to look at the "Before" section and indicate their familiarity with each item (concept vocabulary, events, names, etc.) which you have already entered into the left-most column of the form. Students who indicate "Know It" on any of the items should write their own definition or description in the comments section.
2. Collect and retain these forms.
3. After your lesson, hand the forms out again and ask students to complete the "After" section. Students might decide their understanding of some items was incomplete or inaccurate and need to change the comments, or they might be able to add definitions to items previously left blank.

CONSIDERATIONS

After the second knowledge rating completion, you will have a lot of information. You will be able to tell which items need to be re-taught. If the items are a set of concept vocabulary words, you can also ask students to use the words in sentences; this will reveal much about their true grasp of their meanings.

Another great visual idea is to create a large poster replicating the knowledge rating (without the comments section). For each "Know It," mark with a green dot, each "Not Sure" with a yellow dot, and each "Don't Know" with a red dot. Do both the "Before" and the "After" column. Everyone in the class will be able to see how the red and yellow dots decrease and the green dots increase.

KNOWLEDGE RATING

NAME _____

WORD	COMMENTS/DEFINITION
<p>BEFORE <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p> <p>AFTER <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>	
<p>BEFORE <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p> <p>AFTER <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>	
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<p>BEFORE <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p> <p>AFTER <input type="checkbox"/> Know It <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>	

SUMMARIZING [TEXT WORK]

DESCRIPTION

Summarizing is an important skill because it requires students to think about the text, to determine importance in a text, and to use their own writing skills while they put the main ideas in their own words. Summarizing difficult texts can make these documents more accessible to young readers.

MATERIALS

Text to be summarized,
pre-divided into sections

Form for summary (optional—for the purposes of this description, a form is used)

PROCEDURE

1. Tell students that summarizing is an important skill because it helps them think about text and it helps them practice their own writing skills. Hand out the text and the form.
2. Practice the first section together using your overhead projector. Read it out loud. Then do your thinking out loud as well: “I think the main idea of this section is....” and write your summary on your form. Plan this out ahead of time so you know what you will say and write.
3. Have students work on the remainder of the document. Be sure you walk the room constantly, as they may need quite a bit of help, depending on how dense the text is.

CONSIDERATIONS

Have students work in pairs and assign each pair a section or two instead of the whole document. Then fill in the form together, on the overhead. That way you can talk about each section as they copy the summaries from other groups and you can monitor the accuracy of the summary.

Afterward, you can use the summary as a study guide or as a step to the next activity, which may include determining importance or a Socratic circle.

SUMMARY FORM

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS: SUMMARIZE EACH ARTICLE IN TEN WORDS OR LESS, IF POSSIBLE.

ARTICLE 1	
ARTICLE 2	
ARTICLE 3	
ARTICLE 4	
ARTICLE 5	
ARTICLE 6	
ARTICLE 7	
ARTICLE 8	
ARTICLE 9	
ARTICLE 10	
ARTICLE 11	
ARTICLE 12	