

Wanted: Collaborators

Saskatchewan School Library Association

THE MEDIUM – FALL 2011

Michelle McGovarin and Aimee Whitbread
Cut Knife High School



SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Project Overview

Michelle McGovarin and Aimee Whitbread, secondary teachers from Cut Knife High School, are in the process of creating a collaborative online novel project using the 2011 SYRCA Diamond and Snow Willow nominated books (<http://www.willowawards.ca>). The two educators are looking to collaborate with other teachers and grade 7 classes across Saskatchewan. If project collaboration is impossible, McGovarin and Whitbread have provided an excellent format and innovative structure which could be used for future literacy projects.

Setting Up the Project

Book Selection

Students preview view each book cover and read synopsis for the 2011 SYRCA Diamond and Snow Willow nominated books (<http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books>). Allowing students to choose books at different reading levels and based on personal interests facilitates choice of reading material and differentiated instruction.

Students complete Willow Award Google Form (<http://bit.ly/tp6JAn>) to indicate their top three choices of the nominated books.

Novel Discussion Groups

The teacher selects the literacy groups based on information from teacher-identified reading abilities and student self-identified interest. Five groups are formed, with each group studying a different novel for a total of five novels.

Novel Acquisition

At least one copy of each of the 20 novels is needed. Approximately five copies of each of the five novels are needed for group study and discussion. Although group numbers will vary slightly, an average of 5 students will be placed in each group. The acquisition of an additional novel is advised for use by the teacher or educational support personnel.

Willow Awards Wiki Creation

The Willow Award wiki will detail explanations of the project, including expectations from participating students and teachers. Each novel will have its own wiki page, where the students can share their novel work, reactions to weekly reading, and assignments.

Invitation to Other Classes

Microblogging tools, including Twitter (<http://twitter.com/>) and Yammer (<https://www.yammer.com/>) will be used to invite other middle years classrooms in Saskatchewan to join the project. The hashtag #SaskSla will be used to invite other Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA) members.

Opportunities For Students To Discuss Novels

Participating students will be expected to read specified chapters each week with the option to participate in online discussions using Skype (<http://www.skype.ca/>) and Today's Meet (<http://todaysmeet.com/>)

Participating teachers will plan novel responses and accompanying assessment tools to be completed by students in their respective classrooms. To model collaboration to the students, teachers will take turns planning activities and sharing with these activities with other participating teachers.

Weekly novel activities will focus on literary elements such as character, setting, theme, and plot. The weekly novel discussions will be student-directed using student generated questions aligned with the top tiers of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Project Timeline

Project Implementation (November – December 2011)

1. Students will read specified chapters each week.
2. Students will write weekly responses to their reading on their blog and link to the Willow Awards wiki.
3. Interested classes will “meet” online for novel discussion. The specified times will be set to align with class timetables.
4. Students will self- and peer- assess their reading and reading work for clarity of ideas through word choice, organization, and voice.
5. Teachers will “meet” for weekly 30 minute Twitter chats outside of class time to discuss project progress and reflect on learning.
6. Teachers will be cognizant that the goal is to have the novels finished prior to Christmas break.
7. After completion of the novels, students will complete a “book talk” in their choice of format, such as video commercial, group skit, Prezi (<http://prezi.com/>), comic strip, or poster. Book talks will be posted on the Willow Awards wiki.

Enrichment/Extensions (January-February 2012)

1. Students can create a sequel to their SYRCA Willow Award novel by creating a fake book jacket or writing a “fan fiction”.
2. Students can write a review of their Willow Award novel and post it on the Willow Awards wiki.
3. Students can read an additional Willow Award novel in either category, create another book talk, and post on the Willow Award wiki.
4. Students can read three more SYRCA Willow Award novels in the same category (Diamond or Snow) and vote for their favourite in the Willow Awards.

Teachers who are interested in collaborating with McGovarin or Whitbread, please contact them via e-mail or Twitter.

E-mail: michelle.mcgovarin@lskysd.ca Twitter: [@mcgovarin](https://twitter.com/mcgovarin)

E-mail: aimee.whitbread@lskysd.ca Twitter: [@aimeewhitbread](https://twitter.com/aimeewhitbread)

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Required Books

Snow Willow Books (grades 7 – 9)

- Dear George Clooney* by Susin Nielsen (\$17.99 ULS, \$13.67 Chapters)
- Free As A Bird* by Gina McMurchy-Barber (\$12.99 ULS, \$11.82 Chapters)
- A Hare In The Elephant's Trunk* by Jan L. Coates (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- Haunted* by Barbara Haworth-Attard (\$17.99 ULS, \$9.99 Chapters)
- Home Truths* by Jill MacLean (\$14.95 ULS, \$11.36 Chapters)
- No Safe Place* by Deborah Ellis (\$12.95 ULS, \$14.40 Chapters)
- Puppet* by Eva Wiseman (\$11.95 ULS, \$10.91 Chapters)
- Shapeshifter* by Holly Bennett (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- Thunder Over Kandahar* by Sharon E. McKay (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- The Worst Thing She Ever Did* by Alice Kuipers (\$15.99 ULS, \$12.15 Chapters)

Diamond Willow Books (grades 4 – 6)

- After All, You're Callie Boone* by Winnie Mack (\$8.99 ULS, \$8.99 Chapters)
- Animals That Changed The World* by Keltie Thomas (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- Fatty legs* by Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- The Gargoyle In My Yard* by Phillipa Dowding (\$8.95 ULS, \$8.95 Chapters)
- The Midnight Curse* by L.M. Falcone (\$10.95 ULS, \$10.95 Chapters)
- The Odds Get Even* by Natale Ghent (\$14.99 ULS, \$11.39 Chapters)
- Ortega* by Maureen Fergus (\$18.95 ULS, \$14.40 Chapters)
- Stolen Child* by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch (\$8.99 ULS, \$8.99 Chapters)
- Tumbleweed Skies* by Valerie Sherrard (\$12.95 ULS, \$11.78 Chapters)
- Walking backward* by Catherine Austen (\$9.95 ULS, \$9.95 Chapters)

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English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes

CR7.1 View, listen to, read, comprehend, and respond to a variety of texts that address identity (e.g., Thinking for Oneself), social responsibility (e.g., Participating and Giving Our Personal Best), and efficacy (e.g., Doing Our Part for Planet Earth).

CR7.2 Select and use appropriate strategies to construct meaning before (e.g., formulating questions), during (e.g., recognizing organizational structure), and after (e.g., making judgements supported by evidence) viewing, listening, and reading.

CR7.3 Use pragmatic (e.g., author's purpose and point of view), textual (e.g., how author organized text), syntactic (e.g., main and subordinate ideas), semantic/lexical/morphological (e.g., figurative language and specific word meanings by their context, common affixes, and allusions), graphophonic (e.g., word patterns), and other cues (e.g., non-verbal cues, headings, charts, and diagrams) to construct and confirm meaning when viewing, listening, and reading.

CR7.6 Read and demonstrate comprehension and interpretation (including thoughtful and critical response to content and craft) of grade-appropriate texts including traditional and contemporary prose fiction, poetry, and plays from First Nations, Métis, and other cultures.

CR7.8 Read Grade 7 appropriate texts to increase fluency (130-170 wcpm orally; 170-220 silently) and expression.

CC7.1 Create various visual, oral, written, and multimedia (including digital) texts that explore identity (e.g., Exploring Thoughts, Feelings, and Ideas), social responsibility (e.g., Taking Action), and efficacy (e.g., Building a Better World).

CC7.3 Select and use the appropriate strategies to communicate meaning before (e.g., planning and organizing ideas to fit format), during (e.g. using transition words), and after (e.g., revising to eliminate unnecessary repetition) speaking, writing, and other representing activities.

CC7.4 Use pragmatic (e.g., use language that demonstrates respect for others), textual (e.g., use common organizational patterns within texts), syntactical (e.g., ensure agreement of subjects, verbs, and pronouns), semantic/lexical/morphological (e.g., avoid overused and misused words), graphophonic (e.g., enunciate clearly), and other cues (e.g., use appropriate gestures and facial expressions) to construct and to communicate meaning.

CC7.5 Create and present a variety of representations including visual and multimedia presentations such as displays, illustrations, and videos, and enhance communication with appropriate graphic organizers, charts, circle graphs, timelines, maps, and sound effects.

CC7.6 Use oral language to interact purposefully and appropriately with others in pairs, small groups, and large group situations (e.g., contributing to sustaining dialogue, expressing support for others and their viewpoints, discussing and analyzing ideas and opinions, completing a variety of tasks, and contributing to group consensus building).

CC7.7 Use oral language to express effectively information and ideas of some complexity in formal and informal situations (e.g., a procedural description based on personal experience, a demonstration, a persuasive speech, a dramatization).

CC7.8 Write to describe a person; to narrate an imaginary incident or story; to explain and inform in a news story, a factual account, and a business letter; to persuade in a letter and in interpretation of a text.

CC7.9 Experiment with a variety of text forms (e.g., meeting, presentation to adults, descriptive poem, opinion piece, a review, front page of a newspaper, short script) and techniques (e.g., dialogue, figurative language).

AR7.1 Set and achieve short-term and long-term goals to improve viewing, listening, reading, representing, speaking, and writing strategies.

AR7.2 Appraise own and others' work for clarity and correctness.