



In the spotlight of “Celebrating Literacy” this week: Living Arts class, 7th grade English, and 3rd grade.

Check out the literacy connections in January...

The second week of January is “Letter Writing Week”

January 18th is “Thesaurus Day”

January 23rd is “National Hand Writing Day”

January 31st is “Inspire Your Heart with Art Day”.

CRITICAL THINKING MADE RELEVANT FOR TEENS -

What is the connection between critical thinking skills, making life changes, and vocabulary words and phrases like: *epidemic*, *processed*, *nanny state*, *the McGovern report*, and *corporation*? In Mrs. Dickson’s **7th grade Living Arts class**, the documentary *Fed Up*, made in 2014 by filmmaker Stephanie Soechtig and TV journalist Katie Couric, has inspired students to consider their consumption of foods and drink and question how healthy or unhealthy their choices are. The official movie trailer states that the documentary “*uncovers why-despite media attention, the public’s fascination with appearance, and government policies to combat childhood obesity-generations of American children will now live shorter lives than their parents did*”. Through a process of frequent pausing of the movie for discussion and debate, students became more aware of their right and ability to make wise choices for themselves. In considering the facts and assertions presented in the film, almost all 7th grade students have made some adjustments to what they consume and many have suggested nutritional changes to their families.

“Within two decades, 95% of the population will be overweight or obese.” “By the year 2050, 1 out of 3 Americans will have diabetes.” “In 1980, the percentage of children with Type II diabetes was 0%, in 2010 there were 57,000 children with Type II diabetes.”

Ask a 7th grade student the basis of these facts and predictions and their answer will be a five-letter word: SUGAR

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HELPS EXPLAIN THE WOW IN 3rd GRADE -

The word (*explain*) was last week’s Word of the Week (WOW) for grades 3,4,5 & 6. As usual in preparation for students to be able to complete a group drawing, Mrs. Short led a discussion with the

third grade students about the meaning of the word. It was during that discussion that the students suggested they use what they were learning about Martin Luther King Jr. to describe the word's meaning. Together Mrs. Short and the students created a drawing for the WOW wall in the hallway which shows an audience of white and black faces with a black man standing in front of them and a speech bubble that says, "I have a dream ...". At the bottom of the drawing is the sentence, "Martin Luther King Jr. explained to the world that black and white people should be equal."

MIX CURRENT EVENTS WITH CCSS, ADD A DOLLOP OF TECHNOLOGY AND STIR –

As a starting point for a short writing piece, Dr. Varley used <http://www.Newsela.com> for reading resources, providing 7th grade students with reading abilities ranging from 4th to 9th grade with leveled reading material in order for them to gather background knowledge on the Syrian civil war and the refugee situation. Students then viewed a 360 degree virtual reality video, *Clouds Over Sidra*, a short documentary of less than ten minutes created by Chris Milk and Gabo Arora, that tells the story of Sidra, a twelve year old girl who fled her home in Syria to a refugee camp in Jordan where she has spent 18 months living with over 80,000 other displaced Syrians.

The writing assignment that followed this information gathering process was to write a paragraph describing Sidra's life. This assignment, using the structure of introduction, three main points, and conclusion, produced class discussions and practice on the difference between main ideas and supporting ideas as well as how to systematically approach revision and editing and the necessity of replacing "dead" words with more powerful, specific language.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. The ability to **read, write,** and **communicate** connects people to one another and empowers them to achieve things they never thought possible. **Communication** and **connection** are the basis of who we are and how we live together and interact with the world." *International Literacy Association (2015)*