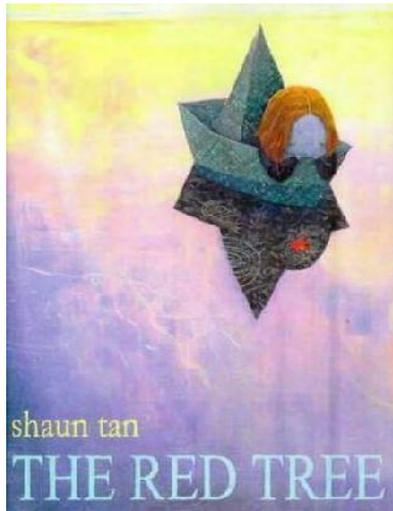


Michelle Tan, Singapore



'The Red Tree' by Shaun Tan

Illustration/ text: Rich pictures which speak volumes and the universal theme of inspiration and hope which will resonate with students of all ages. The illustrations in this book are also multi-layered and left open to interpretation.

Profile of students: This unit plan will be carried out with a group of teenage learners between the ages of 14 to 16. In the Singapore context, English is taught as a first language. The students span a range of abilities, from the high ability ones who come from good socio-economic backgrounds to those who are struggling learners of the language who come from homes which do not speak English. This means that both in terms of academic and language competence, the students have varied abilities.

Themes:

The story that runs through the book is also powerful with much being conveyed through few words. This manifests the power of language. All the desired skills can also be taught with this text.

Teaching strategies/ techniques:

- **Writing activity**

Give students first and last page of picture book – they decide on what happens in-between and come up with their own version.

Provide students with first and last 2 pages of text – they decide on what happens in-between and write their own version

Skills: Writing a narrative, Cohesion, Coherence, Focus on words that will add life to the story

- **Reflective writing**

How did you fill the pages in-between? Reasons for your choice?

Skills: using language, reflection on the process, developing sensitivity to language, aspects of writing / drawing (purpose, audience, effects)

- **Reading Text**

Working through illustrations: allowing students to closely examine the picture and pay attention to details, interpreting the images.

Skills: Explicit teaching through demonstration of attention to details of colour, space, line, presentation, page layout, frames, development of story. Inferential, analytical and evaluative skills.

- **Critical thinking**

Students to work through the following questions:

Why does she feel there's nothing to look forward to?

What does it say about her?

What is the author implying (examine connection between first and last page)

How do the illustrations convey the text?

- **Speaking & Listening**

Students share their responses to the questions raised

Compare their pictures and stories with the actual version

Making connections: story to the world to myself and what I'm going through

Choral reading: tone, stress, intonation, pitch

Skills: Sensitising them to language and details, listening with empathy, respecting others' viewpoints.

- **Vocabulary**

Expressions like "Monday blues", "Depressed" etc.

Expressing personal emotions and feelings using related vocabulary

Substituting the words in bold print and consider effects of change (use of Thesaurus)

Skills: Extending vocabulary, raising awareness of the precision of word use, emphasising the need to use rich vocabulary to create effect needed.

- **Cross-Curricular Link**

Art: to discuss with specialists the use of medium, colours, space, presentation and their effect on tone, meaning and evoking emotions.

Skills: Making connections between subjects, understanding the finer aspects of appreciating language and art, having the language to talk about pictures in an informed manner.

- **Multiple intelligences:**

Verbal-Linguistic

Interpersonal

Intrapersonal

Visual

Activating Schema

Application of Krashen's and Vygotsky's theories: ZPD, I+1 (teacher's input higher)

Van Gogh approach – start with the book, to society to the individual

3-level guide

Thought organiser (What do I see? What do I think?)

