NCSS Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan

*Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story*
Written by Gloria Whelan

Diane K. Brantley
*California State University, San Bernardino*

*Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story* provides the reader with an in-depth look inside the life of a young girl growing up in Ireland. The author provides a realistic and a touching peek into lives of travelers through Megan’s eyes, showing both the joys as well as the personal and familial challenges of a mobile lifestyle. Through the insights of Megan intermediate students will be able to develop an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Students will be able to make connections to others in their global community by getting to know Megan and seeing the different ways in which she views the world. In this short unit, students will participate in the use of readers’ theater, Venn diagrams, the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) and the Know-Want to Know-Learned- Questions (KWLQ) strategy. As a culminating activity, the students will prepare a story comparing their lives to the life Megan experiences as an Irish Traveller.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story by Gloria Whelan and Illustrated by Beth Peck. (Notable, 2012) Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press. Ages: 8-11 ISBN: 1585364495 Recommended for Grades 3-5 Time frame for unit: 5-7 days, one hour per day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary</td>
<td>Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story provides a look into the life of Megan Brady, a young 10 year old girl growing up in Ireland. Megan’s life revolves around two seasons: summer and winter. (This is actually what it is called: her summer life and her winter life) Megan and her family belong to a group of people known as the Travelers who spend their summers traveling the Irish countryside to find work. When summer ends, they move to Dublin to wait out the winter. In this story, you will see the life of a Traveler through the eyes of a young girl, struggling to make sense of a life that she sometimes sees as being very mixed up and confusing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### NCSS Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>People, Places and Environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>Global Connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Materials

- 6 copies of the book, Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story
- Lined paper,
- Pencils and crayons,
- Elmo machine or document camera,
- Map of the world,
- Globe,
- Copies of the KWLQ chart and Venn diagram for each student,
- Blank booklets for each student for diaries.

### Objectives:

1. Students will name and describe three differences and three similarities between the life of a Traveler in Ireland and their own lives.
2. Students will develop and demonstrate an appreciation of the Irish culture and way of life through the reading of the text, watching a presentation on the country of Ireland, and through class discussions of the text.
3. Students will identify Ireland on a world map and describe its size in relationship to the size and location of their own country.
4. Students will turn the text into a readers’ theater script and perform it for the class.

### Procedures

#### Exploration/Introduction:

**Day One:**

1. Prepare a KWLQ chart based upon what they know about the country of Ireland (This should be done prior to watching the video).
2. Begin the unit by watching a short National Geographic video called *Destination Ireland* found at: [http://kidsnationalgeographic.com/videos.html](http://kidsnationalgeographic.com/videos.html)
3. After viewing the video, have students describe everything they know about the country, its people, traditions, language and food. There will be a large copy of the KWLQ chart at the front of the classroom and individual copies for the students to record their responses.
4. Have students view the video and take notes using their individual KWLQ charts in the “L” column (see Appendix A). Remind them that they will be sharing their responses with the class once the video has ended.
### Development:

**Assessment:**
1. Engage students in a discussion of what they learned from the video as the teacher writes their responses on the large KWLQ chart under the “L” or *Learned* column.
2. Have students provide information on what they would like to learn about Ireland and its culture during the short mini unit on Ireland. This information will be recorded on the chart under the “W” or *Wants to Know* column. Their responses will help to guide the lesson and deepen their exploration of the country and its people.

**Day Two:**
1. Review the information written on the KWLQ chart.
2. Use the DL-TA strategy to read aloud *Megan’s Year: An Irish Traveler’s Story* (2011) to the class (see Appendix B). It is important to stop at pre-planned locations to ask both literal and inferential questions as a means of assessing comprehension.
3. Re-read portions of the text as needed as a means of clarifying their understanding of the story.
4. Develop a Venn Diagram (see Appendix C) to note the similarities and differences in their lives and the life of Megan Brady.
5. Use the Venn Diagram to create a comparison story in which they describe a day in their lives and the day in the life of Megan Brady.

**Assessment:**
1. Prior to sharing their stories with a partner, give students a copy of the Proofreading Checklist found in Appendix E.
2. Have students spend 15 minutes proofreading, editing and revising their stories prior to submitting them for final grading. A proofreading grade will be given along with a content grade.
3. Together develop a set of criteria or rubric for scoring the content section of this assignment.

### Expansion:

**Day 3:**
1. Place students in groups of 4-5 and give them a copy of the book.
2. Prior to beginning to convert the story into a reader’s theater script, place a copy of the first two pages of the text on an ELMO machine and together write out the beginning of the script. (See Appendix F for step-by-step directions for preparing a reader’s theater script).
3. Each group will then continue to develop their own scripts. Once the scripts have been completed, give
each group 2-3 days to practice their scripts prior to performing them for the class.

**Assessment.**

1. Assess students in three areas: task completion, cooperation and staying on-task.
2. Prior to students beginning their scripts, provide each group with the Cooperative Group Scoring Guidelines found in Appendix D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Extension Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Folding Maps: The idea behind the use of a folding map is to demonstrate the size and different location of places on a map. In this case, the students would compare their home city, state and country to Dublin, Ireland. To create a folding map, have students:
| | 1. Fold a piece of paper in half four times. The ideal size for the paper is 22” x 34” but any size of paper will be sufficient.
| | 2. On the outermost and smallest section of the paper, have each student will draw the outline of their city.
| | 3. Open up the fold and have the students draw an outline of their state.
| | 4. Open up the paper again and have the students draw an outline of their country.
| | 5. Have students open up the paper completely and draw a map of the world, especially noting the location of their city, state and country as well as Megan’s home country of Ireland. You can have them add as much or as little detail as you deem appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to GloriaWhelan.com! Retrieved from <a href="http://gloriawhelan.com/about.html">http://gloriawhelan.com/about.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Traveller’s Past into the Present. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.travellerheritage.ie">http://www.travellerheritage.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover Ireland! Retrieved from <a href="http://www.discoverireland.ie">http://www.discoverireland.ie</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Author’s Bio

Diane Brantley is a Professor in the College of Education at California State University, San Bernardino. She comes to the university setting with 11 years of elementary school teaching experience. She teaches courses in literacy across the curriculum to pre-service high school teachers. Much of her research has been done in the field of social studies, content-area literacy and language acquisition: Email dbrantle@csusb.edu
Appendix A

**K-W-L-Q Strategy** (Schmidt, 1999)

1. Select a non-fiction text(s) on a topic of study and use the K-W-L-Q chart below throughout the learning process. To begin with you will use the “K” column as a means of finding out what the students know on the topic. Chart their responses.

2. After finding out what they already know, you will ask them what they would like to know more about on the topic of study. Chart their responses.

3. As you progress through the book or through a unit of study, stop and chart what they have learned.

4. Once your book or unit is near completion, chart what new questions they have on the topic and continue the learning process. The chart can then be used as a study guide before an exam or as a graphic organizer to help the students write an essay about what they have learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I Know</td>
<td>What I Want to Know</td>
<td>What I Learned</td>
<td>New Questions I Have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA)

and Directed Listening-Thinking Activity (DL-TA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prediction #1 (made after reviewing book flap and cover):</th>
<th>Prediction #2 (made after reading chapter one):</th>
<th>Words I Expect (students brainstorm a list of words they expect to see in this text based on the cover, flap and first chapter):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (Stop at 6 pre-selected points in the chapter and have the student summarize what they’ve read so far. They can write summary statements here or draw a picture.)</td>
<td>2. (These can then be used to write a summary of the entire chapter at the end of each chapter.)</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Venn Diagram

Me

Megan
Appendix D

Cooperative Group Scoring Sheet (Teacher Copy)

Date: ______________________________

Group Activity: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cooperation: ____________%  Team On-task: ____________%

Team Completion: ____________%  \[
\text{(Each area is equal to a maximum of } 33.3\% \text{ of the total score.)}
\]

Total of all scores ____________%  Total of all scores ____________%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cooperation: ____________%  Team On-task: ____________%

Team Completion: ____________%  \[
\text{(Each area is equal to a maximum of } 33.3\% \text{ of the total score.)}
\]

Total of all scores ____________%  Total of all scores ____________%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
<th>Team Members: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cooperation: ____________%  Team On-task: ____________%

Team Completion: ____________%  \[
\text{(Each area is equal to a maximum of } 33.3\% \text{ of the total score.)}
\]

Total of all scores ____________%  Total of all scores ____________%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of all scores</th>
<th>Total of all scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________%</td>
<td>____________%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Each area is equal to a maximum of 33.3% of the total score.)</td>
<td>(Each area is equal to a maximum of 33.3% of the total score.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Cooperative Group Scoring Sheet (Team Copy)

Date: ______________________________

Group Activity: ____________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members: _____________________________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cooperation: ____________%

Team On-task: ____________%

Task Completion: ____________%

Total of all scores ____________%

(Each area has is equal to a maximum of 33.3% of the total score)

Strengths:

Areas of Improvement:
Appendix E

Proofreading Checklist

Questions to ask yourself: (Put a checkmark in the blank after you answer each question)

_____ 1. Did I begin each sentence with a capital letter?

_____ 2. Did I write each sentence as a complete thought?

_____ 3. Did I spell the words correctly or circle those words that I need to look up in the dictionary?

_____ 4. Did I remember to vary how I begin each sentence so they don’t all begin with the words the, I and then?

_____ 5. Did I remember not to start my sentences with the word and?

_____ 6. Did I leave enough space between my words?

_____ 7. Is my writing neat enough so that someone else could read my writing?

_____ 8. Did I leave a one-inch margin on my paper?

_____ 9. Did I write my name and date on my paper?

_____ 10. Did I read my story to be sure it makes sense and then make changes as needed?

_____ 11. Did I give my paper to a buddy to read and response to before I turned it in to the teacher?

(Brantley, 2006, 2014)
Appendix F

**Reader’s Theater**

1. Select a text to convert to a script or use a pre-made script. When working with heterogeneous groups you will be able to assign the reading parts based on the skill levels of the students. Generally you will want groups of no more than five.
2. Once a script has been selected and the reading parts have been assigned, read the entire script to the students using the appropriate intonation.
3. Locate difficult vocabulary within the text and reread the sentences that contain these vocabulary words to the students. Have them use the context of each sentence to determine the meaning of the words.
4. Chorally read the script together.
5. Provide time for each student to silently read his or her assigned part of the script. Next allow them time to read aloud their part. This practice time allows them to focus on the correct pronunciation of the words, the meaning of the text and the flow of the language before they are asked to read it aloud to the group.
6. Together read through the entire script several times and then discuss the storyline as a means of building comprehension.
7. You may have the students construct paper plate masks with a Popsicle stick attached to hold it up in front of his or her face when performing the reader’s theater or you may provide them with a hat to wear as a small costume.
8. When the students have mastered reading their individual parts, they will perform the reader’s theater in front of a small audience. Remember that when using the reader’s theater strategy, the students are reading from the script when performing rather than memorizing the script. This differentiates this strategy from a play performance in which they add motions and perform without a script. Reader’s theater is often performed while seated.