Clark University Master of Arts in Teaching Program  
Learning Activity Plan

The Giver LAP: Reading Between the Lines

I. **Content:** Describe what it is you will teach. What is the content?

In this lesson, students will work on making inferences about the community that Jonas lives in so that they can practice “reading between the lines.” While students have demonstrated an ability to complete tasks like these or to find inferences, some students are still confused by the very nature of the book or the foundation of the society. This lesson should also provide students with an idea of how Lois Lowry structures the start of her novel from Jonas’ perspective as compared to directly explaining.

II. **Learning Goal(s):** Describe what specifically students will know and be able to do after the experience of this class.

Students will know and be able to:
- Identify specific aspects of Jonas’ society that seem peculiar to us such as “no biological pregnancies, chosen for job at 12, ride bicycles everywhere,” etc.
- Generate a *question* about that specific aspect of the society for the second column of the inference chart. Question why it exists etc?
- Develop an *educated guess* or inference in response to the question about why that part of society exists.
- Collaborate with other students in small groups and communicate civilly with one another.
- Explore the reasons why Lois Lowry provides us this information in this particular way.
- Cite specific and relevant evidence from the text in order to support their claims or educated guesses.

III. **Rationale:** Explain how the content and learning goal(s) relate to your Curriculum Unit Plan learning goals.

One of my larger goals in this unit is helping students recognize author purposes or authorial intent. Before they can move onto this larger and unwieldy goal, they need to develop close reading skills to explore the exact nature a certain phrase or a certain detail has on a story. These goals will prove a necessary foundation to later learning in all units. Once we have identified explicit examples of what Jonas’ community is like as well as inferred why his community might be this way – then we can move forward into asking why the author consciously created this veil of perspective for us.

IV. **Assessment:** Describe how you and your students will know they have reached your learning goals.

- I will collect student KWL charts in order to assess their understanding of the concept.
- I will circulate through small groups when necessary and assess their discussion skills and content there.
- I will assess each students’ participation in whole class discussion.

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V. Personalization and equity: Describe how you will provide for individual student strengths and needs. How will you and your lesson consider the needs of each student and scaffold learning?

Students in this class have seemed perplexed by the nature of the novel because it does not provide a straightforward description of “real life” characters with realistic problems. The fantasy or sci-fi hypothetical nature of this novel has proven difficult for many of my students to relate to—even after the Build Your Own Utopia project. This activity is hoping to serve as an opportunity to scaffold that close reading into the text and really try to draw a better understanding about the functions of that society for the whole class.

In addition, my ELLs will need support with this activity because the novel has confused them in particular. We will work together as a whole class for a couple examples before going to small groups in order to help students more fully understand how to complete the graphic organizer and ask those questions. In addition, the graphic organizer will provide a clear visual rather than an abstract concept that students can fill out and complete. I will make sure that I check-in with my ELL students and students who struggle in particular.

VI. Activity description and agenda: Describe the activities that will help your students understand the content of your class lesson by creating an agenda with time frames for your class. Be prepared to explain why you think each activity will help students on the path toward understanding.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (Min)</th>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Teacher greet students as they enter the room and takes attendance. Directs their attention to the bellringer on the board: “Write down three things you know about Jonas’ society. It can be simple and straightforward. Example: I know that Jonas gets assigned a job at 12 years old.”</td>
<td>Students enter the classroom and take their seats. Begin working on bellringer in their bellringer journals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Teacher asks students if they know what an “inference” is. Explain if no one knows. Teacher reviews the activity for the day and puts a graphic organizer up on the board. Asks one student for an example that they wrote down on their bellringer. Uses this to model the process of going through the graphic organizer.</td>
<td>Students listen as teacher explains inferences and the inference activity. Participate in the modeling process and offer examples for the graphic organizer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Teacher directs students to work in small groups and circulates throughout them.</td>
<td>Students work in small groups to share their examples and work to create questions for these examples as well as “educated guesses” to answer them about the society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Teacher directs student attention to the front of the room and facilitates a</td>
<td>Students share out their examples and inferences from their small group</td>
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<td>5 min</td>
<td>Ask students to write a response to the prompt: “Why do you think Lois Lowry, the author, gives us all this information without telling us directly? You can think about in general but I also want you to think about this book in particular. What about this story would make her want us to make guesses or inferences rather than know right away?” Students would work on the bellringer until the end of the period. Pass in to teacher.</td>
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HW: Reach the next chapter and make 3 inferences about it.

VII. List the Massachusetts Learning Standards this lesson addresses.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1**
  Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5**
  Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C**
  Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.A**
  Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

VIII. Reflection

a. In light of all areas of planning, but especially in terms of your stated purpose and learning goals, in what ways was the activity(ies) successful? How do you know? In what ways was it not successful? How might the activity be planned differently another time?

With regards to my goals, students absolutely met the first three but fell short of exploring exactly why Lois Lowry might structure her novel this way. Students did demonstrate an increased understanding and ability to generate these inferences, especially on the graphic organizer but it moved from being a small group activity to a whole class activity almost the whole time. This entailed that all students had almost all of the same information and same whole-class generated inferences on them than I had.

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preferred. I had hoped that some students might even identify the same element of the community in *The Giver* but come up with very different inferences or interpretations. In the future, I will push more for the small group discussion and not back down.

b. What did you learn from the experience of this lesson that will inform your next LAP?

For my next LAP, I hope to continue emphasizing the importance of these inferences. I also very much would like to incorporate the element of Lois Lowry’s choices back into the classroom as it is one of the overall units of my goal. In my next LAP, perhaps I will start the lesson with a focus on the intentionality of authors and question exactly what her work here means for readers.