**Curriculum Plans for Teaching *Lost in Lexicon***

***An interdisciplinary unit in English and Math***

**Overview**

Given both the complex mathematical and linguistic topics the book addresses, it is a perfect text for helping students to see connections and confluences between the humanities and mathematics. We taught the novel to an Honors English class of 13 sixth graders, who met as a class five times a week (45 mins 4/week; 90 mins 1/week). The schedule was such that math teacher, Dotty Corbiere, was able to attend all 90 minute classes, so those were reserved for exploration of mathematical concepts related to the novel. The rest of class time was devoted to literary analysis and exploration of the book as led by the English teacher, Elizabeth Pritchett. The entire unit was five weeks long, so we began by agreeing on understanding goals to guide our lesson planning. Our understanding goals for the unit were as follows:

Understanding Goals for *Lost in Lexicon*

1. Students will explore the idea and effect of stereotypes as they appear in the novel, specifically looking at how gender stereotypes can impact boys’ and girls’ performances in math and English.
2. Students will learn different types of poetic meter and rhyme, identifying forms of both in poems that they read as well as using various forms of meter and rhyme in their own poems.
3. Students will learn about narrative structure and will be able to identify the novel’s main narrative structure. As part of this UG, they will be able to recognize how a story’s setting, characterization, and conflict (and complications) can help us to identify main themes within the novel.
4. Students will design and teach a lesson to an audience of their choice about a particular issue or concept related to math; language; or technology.
5. Students will experience and identify ways in which the disciplines of math and English are interrelated and, even, interdependent. Moreover, they will be able to explore the text’s mathematical concepts in greater depth and detail, seeing how these concepts apply to their lives.

**Lessons Plans**

**Day 1**

**Plan and activity:**

1. Today we introduced the blog journal that students used throughout the unit. In it, students were asked to reflect on particular questions, respond to others’ writing, or to post original pieces of creative writing.
2. Journal Prompt #1: Describe a time you were lost (either literally or metaphorically). Write this in just one paragraph (with a beginning, middle, and end), and use plenty of sensory detail to show your reader what the experience was like.

**Sample Journal Entries:**

One time where I was lost was in math class Ms. Rob was droning on about

angles and how to measure them. I started looking out the window thinking

about how bad lunch was probably going to be, and all the bad things in my

life. Ms. Rob then called on me to answer some question that I didn’t

hear, and my mind fluttered back to reality. I answered the question,

after it was repeated several times, and started doing G.P.S. homework

under the table. The homework was all about absolute location and the five

themes of geography. I guess Ms. Rob doesn’t like geography because I got

in big trouble after class. I barely avoided a D-slip because it was the

first week of school and all the teachers were going easy on us.   – Ian

I remember that once during a Reading test in fifth grade, I was lost

because I wasn’t sure how to answer the question. Looking around, I

noticed how everyone was working, staring hard at the pages. Frantically,

I glanced at the clock and realized that I was almost out of time. My

heart pounding, I quickly reached for my pencil to try the other

questions, my previous thoughts about how I would answer it still ringing

in my mind. Suddenly, as I was answering the next one, the answer popped

in my head. Without hesitation, I went back. Proudly, when I finished the

challenging question, I realized with sudden annoyance, that I had

forgotten what I wanted to say in the question I had been working on… -Olivia

Wandering slowly through the vibrant alleyways, I clung to my father’s

shirt tail, barely tall enough to reach at the time. We had come a long

way and I, in turn, had felt a surge of fascination upon glancing at the

colored garments and rich sauces displayed at every corner. Bells twinkled

merrily on a vendor’s cart, and I stopped to admire the tarnished bronze

of their surfaces. Glancing ahead, I saw my family gliding into the crowd.

I chased them summarily, my chestnut curls bouncing in an uncontrollable

manner. “Wait!” I cried, my croaking words blending into the

commotion. But instantly, they had disappeared. I pulled up my dress and

sat on the dirty pavement, hardly noticing a smudge on the side pocket.

Tears began to ascend and roll down the bridge of my nose, though I paid

no mind to this. They were out of my reach. – Toni

In second grade, my best friend and I created a project together for

school. We both wanted to make the project different ways, and one thing

led to another, and soon we weren’t talking to each other. After a week

or so, I started to realize that I missed her, and there was an aching

inside when ever I saw her. I remembered how gaily we had played together,

and how she and I had always stuck together no matter what. She had always

argued against my sister when my sister picked on me, and I against hers. I

no longer had someone to turn to when I wanted an opinion or

encouragement. One day I tried to remember what we had been fighting about,

and I realized with a start that I had forgotten. At lunch that day, I

went up to her timidly and asked her if she remembered. She thought about

it, and then said she didn’t. We quickly got back together, but I’ll

always remember how it felt to be without her. –Talia

        Bump, bump, bump. Our car rolls along the dusty dirt

road.Where are we? That’s the same question I’ve been asking myself

for the past few hours. It looks like we’re in the middle of nowhere.

Not a single other car has passed us for miles. It’s just us, surrounded

by acres and acres of forest.“How long until we get there?” my brother

keeps asking. Nobody knows. We’re lost. The once bright blue sky is

turning to a very dark purple, and I can sense that night is coming. We

start to worry if we will ever get out, and my stomach drops. Another hour

of iPods, cards, and games only brings more forest.Then, my dad spots a

sign, reflecting off the headlights in the distance. When we approach it,

we read that it is for the highway, in two miles! I am so relieved.

Finally, our car approaches the intersection. I see other cars and a paved

road. Found. – Abby

With a Missing Piece

It wasn’t really how you feel when you’re walking around in a shoe

store, and you suddenly realize that your mom stopped following you. It

was more that you were halfway across the world from your family,

wondering if you would ever get back together. It was a Friday morning

recess, my favorite time of the week. My best friend and I had planned

this one to be our best yet: we were going down the “snow slide”

together, a small hill covered with thick ice.  My teacher, right before

recess, asked me if I could help her organize a few colored pencils. I

knew this wasn’t a choice for me, so I told my friend about my deed and

said I would meet her in a couple minutes. As soon as I was released, I

dashed outside to my organized “meeting spot”. I got there-and there

was nobody in sight. I whipped my head from side to side, trying to spot

my friend. I did-but in a very different place than I should have found

her-with the most popular girl in my class instead of with

ME. “Annika!” I cried as I raced towards her. She didn’t even

twitch. I waved as wildly as I could. No movement. I got the hint…but I

shouldn’t have had to. I had no friend…a missing piece.

A couple of weeks later, we finally made up - I gave her my Oreos. Not the

best way to apologize, but a friend is a friend.

-Kaitlyn

A lot of times, when I’m reading a really good book, I’ll just zone

out on everything else and be “lost” in the book. One of these books

was The City of Ember. I would just go up to my room and start

reading.Everything else just disappeared and all I thought about was the

book/what I was reading. When that happens, I usually feel like I’m

where I’m reading about, and when I either finish or have to stop, it

feels really strange. It feels like I just woke up and I’m in a sort of

daze. Being “lost” in a book is actually kind of fun. -Addy

Once, when I was six years old, my family and I were going to Jay Peak in

Vermont, there was a heavy fog hanging in the air, blurring our vision.

The later it got, the more times we turned around, stopped for gas, and

consulted Google Maps on Dad’s Blackberry. We hadn't seen another car

for at least an hour. We stopped for fast food after a few hours.

McDonalds was all we could find. My brother, only eight at the time, fell

into a torturous chorus of, “Are we there yet?” We played travel bingo

and all those cheesy car games until we fell asleep wrapped in

sweatshirts. We woke up hours later, still on the road; we seemed to be

passing the same background over and over, never getting anywhere. Now mom

was driving, dad took a break from the wheel and slept, I played my

brother’s GameBoy for a while, not very well, at that. After countless

hours of being lost in this swirling labyrinth of haze, we finally asked a

man at a gas station where the address was. He gave us vaguedirections,

but it was close enough, the directions weren't right though, and we ended

up at a dead end. We scanned the nearby streets and finally found the

small house, but the friends we were supposed to stay with were asleep. We

rang the doorbell, and when our friend finally came down, one look at us,

she was laughing, hopelessly lost in puddles of laughter, then we started

laughing, too, “We got lost.” Was all Mom could say. – Charlotte

        My sister, Sophie, my dad, and I where driving back from Ocean City New Jersey, a never-ending seven-hour ride. About a half an hour into the car ride, we turned onto the highway. Cars were bumper-to-bumper, squeezed onto the highway so tightly it was a risk even

to move an inch. My dad quickly swerved around, almost tipping the car

over on its side, as he pulled off on the nearest exit. At that rate, we

would be back in Weston by December.

            My dad decided to not even try the highway, because

there was so much traffic, and so we drove through lush, green country

sides, and on roads that were made of dirt. We tried to decipher our way

through the maze of roads, but it was almost impossible. Finally, after

about two hours, we realized that we had just been going in one big

circle. We passed by the same quaint villages, the same fields with the

same flowers, and the same never-ending long stretches of road.

        We tried our GPS again, but it just took us even farther

into the maze of roads and streets. The map was so mind boggling, it hurt

our heads to even look at it. We tried about a thousand different roads,

and finally, finally, after about 6 hours, we pulled out of New Jersey and

soon saw the New York City skyline. –Ellie

A time I was lost was in Utah, during September of 4th grade. My friend

Tess and I were hiking up through the canyons (I, sadly, was wearing sandals, and got a cactus thorn in my toe). It was a gorgeous, warm day,and down below us, I could see the Colorado River. Across the river was a long   sandbar, where our tents were. There were no other people or cars or roads for at least two miles. As we continued up the red, sandy trail, dozens of lizards scurried across our path. The Tamarisk and Cottonwood trees were swaying, as if performing a waltz underneath the endless blue sky. A pair of hawks swooped in courting dances above us, and it seemed like the kind of day where nothing could go wrong. Well, that obviously

wasn’t true.

The trail curved behind a large, sandstone boulder. We passed by what was probably an old Native American grain storage construction, when we realized that we couldn’t see the sandbar anymore. Ahead of us, the path wound up through strange, sandstone formations. But now, instead of being beautiful works of natural art,  they seemed to be looming at us,  mocking us. The prickly pear cacti now seemed to be waiting for us to stumble in to them. Which is exactly what I did, I might add. Tess almost fell down the steep, rocky canyon, scraping her knees in the process. We pondered what to do, and eventually settled on going higher to try and see back to the tents. So with our cactus-laden feet and scraped-up knees, we plodded onward, with far less energy than before, though I knew we were both experiencing the exhilaration of being lost in the canyons of Utah. More lizards scurried about, but we paid them no mind.

As we hauled ourselves up the final bend of the path, we stood, and were blown away by the beauty of the land, all desperation forgotten. The sky was vast, like a canvas for the red rocks of the canyon. The cottonwood trees below us stood tall and gnarled, and the river bent softly through the canyon. There wasn’t a single cloud in the sky. On all sides of us, the rock dropped steeply away. But… we were still lost. Tess and I searched around to see if we could find the sandbar. At last, our eyes settled on it, and after almost 45 minutes of being lost, we made our way down the path, carefully avoiding the cliffs. – Julia

***Reflection****: Students will invariably ask leading questions in order to get a clearer sense of what to write. Almost immediately a few students asked whether the prompt meant literally lost or if they could write about a figurative experience of being lost. I tried to avoid answering those questions too specifically, and instead asked them to interpret “lost” in whatever way made sense to them. The above entries were written in about 15 minutes and during the class period.*

**Homework:** Read chapter 1. Actively read the chapter using the Predict, Question, React, Summarize method of note-taking in the margins of their books. Also note clues about the characters – Ivan, Daphne, and Aunt Adelaide – while reading.

**Day 2**

**Plan and activity:**

1. Briefly go over the methods of characterization and take notes.
2. Complete Characterization Bingo activity with a partner. (See Appendix of Handouts for a copy of this activity.)

**Homework:** Read chapter 2, tracking characterization methods and clues about character. Make some predictions as well in the margins of your text.

**Day 3**

**Plan and activity:**

1. Finish Characterization Bingo and add ideas about characters based on students’ reading of Chapter 2.
2. Read Chapter 3 aloud – at first as a whole group and then paired reading. The purpose of this lesson is twofold – 1. As a whole class, to model the kinds of thinking and questioning that goes into critically reading and discussing a book; 2. To reinforce the practice of active reading via the note-taking bookmark (appendix).

**Homework:**

1. Actively read Chapter 4, "The Quest." As you read chapter 4, note subtle changes in Ivan and Daphne. Also note places in the text where we are given clues as to what might be causing these changes. Use the bookmark to keep track of the active reading in your text and to check off items as you take notes on them.
2. *Think* (no need to write) about times when your gender may have affected your experience with or thoughts about math. Be prepared to write about this for an in-class blog tomorrow.

***Reflection:***

*I devoted a lot of time to reading in this first week for two reasons: 1. In my experience, students need to “get into” a longer novel before they totally buy in, so getting some momentum in the first week helped to generate excitement about the text; 2. Fitting our curriculum plans into just five weeks necessitated a brisk movement through the reading.*

**Day 4**

**Plan and activities:**

This was a double period of 90 minutes, which is why the plan is more ambitious; it was also the first period where the math teacher, Dotty Corbiere, joined our English class period and introduced the “math angle” of the curriculum.

1. Journal: What do you think of when you think of math? When has your gender affected your feelings about or experience with math? Are there some people who are “math” people and others who are “word” people? Explain.
2. **Math sorting activities based on categories of their choosing. DOTTY, THIS NEEDS A DESCRIPTION AS WELL AS A COPY OF THE ACTIVITY FOR OUR APPENDIX.**

**Homework:**

1. **DOTTY,** I can’t remember exactly what you did but it was something about researching and learning a new method of multiplication.
2. Preposition song (Appendix) – write it three times and record yourself singing it and send it to me.

***Reflection:*** *Because of the novel’s focus on language – its rules, conventions, and beauty – I did some grammar mini-lessons as we read the book. In my experience, getting students to memorize a list of common prepositions is helpful as they begin a study of parts of speech as well as how to identify parts of the sentence.*

**Day 5**

**Plan and activities:**

1. Begin with an anagram: This sport IS KING. Answer: Skiing. (Or any other examples. There’s a cool website actually that shows you anagrams for your name. <http://wordsmith.org/anagram/>) This intro is a way in to discussing the anagram of the cupola as a copula. Discuss the function of the cupola in the story – as a link to another world. Then, discuss what a copula is. Hopefully, they will realize (and remark on the fact that!) the cupola is a kind of copula.
2. Grammar lesson on linking (and helping and action) verbs and their function in a sentence. Distribute a list of verbs (see appendix) and divide students into teams of three. Their task is to create short songs (a la the preposition song) and set them to familiar tunes to help us memorize the common linking and helping verbs.
3. Group work creating the song.

**Homework:**

1. Write out the preposition song (see appendix) three times; record yourself singing it on your email, and send it to me.
2. Read chapter 5 paying particular attention to changes in the cousins as well as what you are learning about the conflicts in Lexicon.
3. Read the following article about the effect of gender on students in math. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jan/26/science/la-sci-math26-2010jan26>

**Day 6**

**Plans and activities:**

1. Finish working on songs about linking, helping, and action verbs. Perform songs in a class “Grammar Idol” and have students conduct an anonymous vote for the winner at the end of class. Write out the “lyrics” (which are really a list of the common linking and helping verbs and basic rules for recognizing them in a sentence) and tune to which it should be sung.
2. Private vote for the Grammar Idol.

**Homework:**

1. **Math:** Go back to the point in the book where Ivan and Daphne get the compass. Draw what you think the compass looks like. Keep that. Keep looking for methods of multiplication; choose one and be prepared to explain it to the class during our class period on Friday.
2. **English:** Work on memorizing your list of verbs and of prepositions.

***Reflections:*** *Although these two days of grammar lessons may seem like a diversion, I actually think the activity gets to one of the main points of the novel: that language – though at times confusing – has rules, just like math does. And, that learning and knowing grammar is important and can be fun!*

**Day 7**

**Plans and activities: Introduce conflict**

**CONFLICT**

Ask one member of class to volunteer to stand outside the classroom while the rest of the class discusses some other topic – the dress code is a topic guaranteed to get my students’ attention. Let students debate the dress code for about 5 minute while the volunteer is waiting outside. The key is to stop the debate while students are still in the midst of rigorous disagreement. Then, invite the student back into the classroom, and ask him/her to arbitrate the class’s disagreement. Give each side 30 seconds to make its case to the “judge.” Then, ask the judge to decide who is right.

*Before the judge gives his/her opinion* ask the entire class to respond to the following **JOURNAL ENTRY**:

1. Which side are you on of this debate?
2. Who / what are you arguing with?
3. Is there anyone in the classroom who has a completely different point of view to yours? (Note: You might need to prompt students to consider points of view of people not “in” the classroom – e.g. the administration of the school). If so, explain what side she/he/it is on and why.
4. For those students, including the judge, who may say that they are neutral or not in disagreement with anyone about the issue, you could ask them to explain the effect of their neutrality. In other words, how will they explain to their friends that they will not take a position on a heated topic? Ask them to explain what kind of dilemma this might create for them personally.

After students have written and shared out a few responses, you might put the word conflict on the board and ask them to brainstorm the different types of conflicts that this debate sparked and might continue to spark if it went further into the entire school. Hopefully, they will say that it caused conflict between students, between students and the school itself, and, perhaps even within their own minds. This gives you a perfect starting point for introducing **TYPES OF LITERARY CONFLICT – person v. person, person v. self, person v. society, person v. nature, etc.**

**HW:**

1. Sing verb and preposition songs.
2. Reread chapter 5 paying particular attention to changes in the cousins as well as what you are learning about the conflicts in Lexicon. Also pay attention to the stereotypes you see as you encounter them.

**Day 8**

**Plans and activities:** Look at blog entries based on yesterday’s class activity re. conflict. Brainstorm a list of the types of conflict that we sparked or that could potentially be sparked as a result of our debate. Brainstorm conflicts in LIL so far. In small groups, make T-charts of internal and external conflicts in Lexicon so far. The focus of this activity should be both identifying the conflict and pinpointing where it seems most evident in the text.

**HW:**

1. Actively read chapter 6.
2. Do second compass drawing based on info from chapter 5 and chapter 6.
3. Finish research on new multiplication method and be prepared to share out.

**Day 9**

**Plans and activities (double period with a math lesson):** Begin by having pairs share out their conflict T-charts: person v. person; person v. institution; person v. society; person v. nature; person v. technology; person v. him/herself. Topics will obviously vary depending on the list of conflicts the class brainstormed in the previous class.

**MATH LESSON:**

Share ideas about girls and math from journal blogs. “No Gender Differences in Math Performances” <http://esciencenews.com/articles/2008/07/24/study.no.gender.differences.math.performance>

“Elementary School Teachers Transfer their Fear of Math onto their Students” <http://esciencenews.com/articles/2010/01/25/elementary.school.women.teachers.transfer.their.fear.doing.math.girls>

**DOTTY:** Share different ways of multiplying and do tessellation exercise on computers.Putting together a poster of Tessellate.

**Homework:**

1. Review preposition song and list of verbs.
2. Finish tessellation pictures of places for our map of Tessellate. **DOTTY, do you have the pictures of this map?**

**Day 10**

**Plans and activities:**

Quick quiz on verbs and prepositions

Chapter 1-6 speed dating questions (see appendix). This activity is a great way to generate a lot of discussion and critical thinking about the literature in a relatively short period of time. To prepare the activity, you will need to set up two circles facing each other (ideally with chairs and tables so that the students can write notes). Then, partner students so that every student is facing another student and that each pair has a different critical reading / thinking question. Students will read their question and then discuss it as a pair for just two minutes. (Set the timer!). They should not take any notes during this discussion period; rather, the goal is to simply generate as many ideas as possible. After the first two minutes, students take notes for another two minutes, trying to capture as many of the “gems” that they came up with in response to their question. (Again, set the timer for two minutes only; part of what makes this activity work for middle school students is the pacing of it!) After the first round, play some fun music and have students dance to a new question with a new partner; as in Musical Chairs, students should be at a new station by the time the music stops. (Again, pacing is all!)

**Homework:** Add any additional notes to your speed dating responses and be prepared to discuss these questions in tomorrow’s class.

**Day 11**

**Plans and activities:** Discuss chapters 1-6, using speed dating question notes.

**Homework:** Read chapter 7 and chapter 8. I didn’t ask students to actively read these chapters for two reasons: 1. I wanted them to read more than they could if they were taking notes; 2. The understanding goals for this part of the book were to help students understand figurative and poetic language by using it. Thus, we didn’t engage in much critical reading of these chapters; instead, we used the ideas in the chapters as a starting point for our own creative writing.

**Day 12**

**Plans and activities:** Activity on figurative language with writing the worst simile or metaphor ever and writing metaphor poems. (See appendix for figurative language handout.)

**Student examples:**

***Worst Similes***

*The grandpa was as wrinkled as an overbaked potato.*

*The computer was as smart as someone who knows everything and can tell you the answers to everything and is really smart.*

*The pond was as clear as a blanket.*

*The snake was as long as a fire truck that's shiny red and it has a hose and people in it yelling and a ladder on top that is squishing the hose.*

*The bear was like a black bear, except it was white, and it had black eyes and a pink tongue that looked like the kind of fish that he ate and swam in the water underneath him.*

*Her face was as flat as cardboard, like a fly that had been squashed against a wall.*

*She was as strong as a bull, with the horns to match.*

*The teacher wagged her finger like a dog who was about to take a wee.*

*He was dying like a fish that had been out of the water and then went back in then came out at 5:47 A.M. then died 5 minutes later then got eaten by a dog that had rabies and had been beaten up 57 minutes ago by a mad man.*

*My use of onomatopoeia is as natural as the ka-chunk ka-chunk ka-chunk of a passing butterfly.*

**Homework:** Write a draft of the metaphor poem; use the poems in your packet as a guide.

***Reflections:*** *Taking a break from close textual analysis at this point turned out to be a good idea because students were able to experience one of the novel’s key messages first-hand and to see how playful language can be! I had them generate their intentionally bad metaphors and similes first as partners and then as individuals. I also asked them to post their best ones to our class blog. Of all the activities that we did throughout this unit, this activity clearly garnered the most laughter and silliness. I also sent their entries to other members of the English department who then voted on the top 3 worst similes. Needless to say, it was a huge hit!*

**Day 13**

**Plans and activities: DOTTY** – graphing on a coordinate plane

**Homework:** Read chapters 9 and 10 (not actively).

**Day 15**

**Plans and activities:** Share metaphor poems and guess titles. Begin poetry lesson on rhyme and meter. (See handout in appendix.) Write one thing that happens in chapters 7,8,9,10 in a rhymed couplet. Introduce meter. Identify meter in “Jabberwocky” and act out action and setting of the poem.

**Homework:** Read chapter 11(again, not actively, but with the knowledge of poetic meter that we went over today in class).

**Day 16**

**Plans and activities:** Review tetrameter and trimeter – specify that a ballad doesn’t have to be iambic and that a beat usually is one syllable, but sometimes (as in “Sir Patrick Spens”) it’s two. Read “Sir Patrick Spens.” Read “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” and “The Cremation of Sam McGee.” We listened to a song version of Sir Patrick Spens, did a reading in the round of “Sam McGee,” and read “La Belle Dame Sans Merci in partners. The important thing is not that they get every detail in each poem, but rather that they read enough ballads that they get a feel for both the sound and subject matter of them.

**Homework:** 1. Actively read chapter 12. Mark places in the text where you get more information about what Daphne and Ivan's compass looks like. Also, make note of specific places about which you have questions. You should post at least three specific questions on our class blog by tomorrow. These should be thoughtful questions, either about a theme, a conflict, or a mathematical concept (those questions, Ms. Corbiere will address in class on Friday). I've given a couple examples of "thoughtful questions" (about earlier chapters) below; these should provide you with models of what I am looking for. Also, remember that a thoughtful question will actually refer to a specific part of the text.

1. On page 121, Daphne recites part of Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" to the Poetry Council. What point is she trying to make in reciting these words, and how successful do you think she is in making her point?

2. On page 116, Ivan tries to teach Miss Needle about using units to measure distance. He ends up frustrated when she doesn't understand his explanations and he thinks "he [is] not a successful translator after all" (117). Who are the most successful translators so far in the novel, and what qualities do these characters possess that make them successful translators?

**Day 17**

**Plans and activities**:Make sure that students have submitted their thoughtful reading questions to the class blog; I didn’t go over these for a few days afterward, but I wanted to make sure that homework credit was given to the students who completed it**.**

Write your ballad with a partner. Use the ballad checklist (again, see appendix) to make sure that your ballad meets the specifications and to help you plan. Be prepared to perform ballads in class tomorrow.

**Homework:** Finish ballads with partner. Prepare to perform ballads tomorrow in class. Read the reading questions that were posted on the blog for last night’s homework.

Reflections: The student-generated reading questions were also a big hit in that they felt super invested in answering these questions. I was impressed by the sophistication of their inquiries; providing examples of strong and provocative reading questions really did help them to generate similarly strong ones.

Some examples of their questions:

1. On page 134, Daphne says, "'...let's call it a league instead of a step...'" Why does Daphne think "a league" is less complicated than "a step"? Why do different words make more or less sense to different people?
2. On page 241, Ivan and Daphne realize that they have forgotten what pi is. The cousins wander around the town, getting vivid but hopeless descriptions of pie and random guesses of the number. Why do you think everyone has forgotten what pi is, and not another number? Is this a symbol for something in Lexicon?
3. On page 137, it says, "Ivan scratched his head with the drawing stick. ‘I don't know how or why, but if this is a treasure hunt, I guess that's where the clues are sending us.’" If the whole Lexicon thing is a treasure hunt, then why aren't the people of Radix and Measure and Tessellate trying to find the treasure as well?
4. Do you think that the Mistress of Metaphor’s brew has any magical powers? The author says, “Perhaps because of the forget-me-nots in the Mistress of Metaphor’s brew, Daphne managed to tell Ivan everything that had happened in the Council almost word for word,” (130). Do metaphors have anything to do with magic?
5. On page 133, Daphne gets frustrated and confused about the compass, and thinks that she is bad at math. If today we are mostly trying to eliminate stereotypes in the world, why do you think the author chooses Daphne, the girl, to struggle with understanding the compass?
6. On page 143, Miss Needle enters the room and gives Daphne and Ivan new tunics. Daphne's is ragged, uneven, and too broad across the shoulders. Ivan's has one sleeve much longer than the other. Miss Needle then asks what the point of measuring is if nothing ever fits. Why do you think Miss Needle has come to this conclusion?
7. On page 121, after Daphne recites the Gettysburg Address (in prose), one of the older members of the Poetry Council screams, "Prose! Here in these hallowed halls!" he gets so angry he kicks a stack of books across the room. Why do you think he reacted this way? Why do you think he reacted so strongly?

**Day 18**

**Plans and activities:** Finish and share ballads.

Post questions that students generated on chart paper. Have students write down their thoughts in response to the question and respond to others’ ideas on the paper as well.

**Homework:**

1. Plot towns we’ve visited so far (e.g. Radix, Tesselate, Merry Measure, Origin – haven’t visited, but its coordinates have been mentioned)
2. Choose one of the questions we “chalk talked” about in class today and then, using some detail from the book, write a paragraph in response.

**Day 19**

**Plans and activities (double period):**

**DOTTY –** answering math questions about chapter 12; plotting towns on coordinate plane; using digi-blocks to derive pi

Last ten minutes of the double period: List major themes that are emerging in the novel so far; students should write these down in their books so that they have access to the list for the night’s homework. Begin reading chapter 13, looking for places where those major themes/ideas recur. Mark them by number when you see them occur in the text.

**Homework:** Finish actively reading through chapter 15.

**Day 20**

**Plans and activities:** Numbered heads together chapters 13-15. (For directions on Numbered Heads Together and specific reading questions for these chapters, please see appendix.)

**Reflections: In the questions for Chapters 13-15, I tried to target particular themes:** friendship and the ways in which it can "cure"**;** division and quarrels; loss (of actual things, or even of certain emotions, feelings, memories); censorship (limiting what people can read, say, and in some cases think); rebellion (against the law, the government, a particular custom, etc.); metaphors for language

**Homework:** Things to look for in actively reading Chapters 16 and 17:

1. What are the physical aspects of Irrationality? What those physical details about its setting tell you about the characteristics and atmosphere of Irrationality.

2. A dynamic character (also known as a round character) changes significantly over the course of the novel. As you read, try to identify any moments of dynamism (significant change) in Daphne and Ivan.

3. A static character (also known as a flat character) shows no growth throughout the story. These characters usually play a minor role and often help us to learn something more about the story's main characters or main conflicts. Try to identify at least three static characters in tonight's reading and, in the margins, write what you think their purpose in the story might be. In other words, what themes, characters, or conflicts do they help us to understand better?

4. Examples of syllogisms in chapter 16. A syllogism is a statement of logic based on a major idea, a minor idea related to or as an example of the major idea, and a conclusion based on both the major and minor ideas.

Here's are two examples:

**Major idea:** All books from that store are new.

**Minor idea:** These books are from that store.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, these books are new.

**Major idea:** All mammals are warm-blooded.

**Minor idea:** All black dogs are mammals.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, all black dogs are warm-blooded.

Sometimes a syllogism can be faulty if one of the statements is flawed, or if from two true statements we draw a ridiculous or illogical conclusion.

Here's an example of a faulty syllogism:

Major idea: All dogs wear a collar, have fur, and fetch balls.

Minor idea: Bill wears a collar, has fur, and fetches a ball.

Conclusion: Bill is a dog.

**In what ways is this syllogism faulty?**

In tonight's reading, also try to identify three faulty syllogisms.

Finally, keep margin notes about anything you'd like to ask Ms. Noyce on Friday for our author’s visit.

**Day 21**

**Plans and activities:** Small groups and share out ideas about active reading. Take notes in books about findings regarding: 1. Dynamic characters; 2. Static characters; 3. Setting and atmosphere; 4.Syllogisms; 5. Questions for Ms. Noyce.

Begin reading Chapter 18, “The Land of Night,” in these same small groups

**HW:** Read chapters 19-20. Quiz tomorrow.

**Day 22**

**Plans and activities:** Quiz on Chapters 16-20 (See Appendix.)

Partnered reading of chapter 21 **Homework:** Read chapters 21-23

**Day 23**

**Plans and activities:** Finish the map of Tessellate. Divide class into four groups; assign each one a quadrant of Lexicon to illustrate / represent using symbols they’ve encountered in the novel. Generate a list of questions, themes, and hypotheses about themes, symbols, and messages to share with Penny tomorrow. (See Appendix for a list of what the students came up with.) **Homework:** Explore the *Lost in Lexicon* website at [www.lostinlexicon.com](http://www.lostinlexicon.com) Also, read chapter 24.

**Day 24**

**Plans and activities:** **DOTTY** – syllogisms 9:45-10

PENNY VISITS – 10-11

**HW:** For HW this weekend, please write a thoughtful thank you note to Ms. Noyce. It doesn't have to be long, but it should say something about what you found most interesting about her talk and what you've enjoyed most about our unit on the book. Also, please read chapter 25 for Monday's class. As you read, try to at least five passages where a big theme emerges. Note your thoughts in the margins -- again, you are just looking for five passages that somehow connect to one of the major ideas we've been discussing: gender roles, similarities that people/cultures have despite more obvious differences, the effects (both positive and negative) of technology on our lives, the power of friendship, etc.

**Day 25**

**Plans and activities:** Discuss big themes found in chapter 25. Do theme targets on posters. The “theme target” is a cool way to help students understand the many layers of meaning and significance that help us to understand a book’s overall theme. They are also a great way for students to practice mining a text for specific references, which is handy for when they write a final paper, take a final test, or simply think holistically about a book’s significance. The poster is essentially three concentric circles: 1. In the center circle, students wrote their group’s theme (I used the list we generated in class for ideas and each group had a different theme to work with, which made it fun to share out later); 2. In the next circle, students found places, events, and characters in the text that had to do with their theme – next to each place, event, character, they wrote a short sentence explaining its connection to their particular theme; 3. In the outermost circle, students found quotations from the text that had something specific to say about the theme (5-6 points per target circle). For time’s sake, I didn’t have them write sentences explaining what the quotation had to do with the theme; I let them explain it to the class when they presented out.

**Homework:** Read chapters 26-27

**Day 26**

**Plans and activities:** Finish theme targets and share out.

**Homework:** Finish reading the book.

**Day 27**

**Plans and activities: DOTTY --** Lego construction with group to show the heart of your village

Share out villages and ideas (See Appendix for pictures of students’ Lego constructions.)

**Homework:**

***Note: These are the exact directions I gave the students to help “coach” them when writing their poem. Because we did quite a bit of work with poetry throughout this unit (and before it), they were conversant with the basic terms (e.g. metaphor, image, “showing not telling,” etc.) of poetry. You might need to offer more specific instruction depending on the experience and confidence of your group.***

Draft a poem in which you use metaphor to illustrate/portray the heart of your village. Great job with your Lego sculptures of the "heart" of your village. And, three cheers to Ms. Corbiere for bringing this activity you all! I loved seeing how you brought each of Lexicon's primary locales to "life" through your innovative use of those Lego bricks. Now, go back and picture your structure in your mind's eye. I've also attached pictures that might make it easier to do so.

Reflect on what you chose to represent about your village. Was it the slide or the jumprope in Measure, the white park bench or the angular bushes of Brevity, the mountain wall and the bridge of Origin?

Then, for homework, write a poem of 15-25 lines (No longer please – Remember: Brevity is the soul of wit! ☺) in which you explore one particular image, place, person, or event that reflects the "heart" and “soul” of your village. Try not to tell us that your village, for instance, is lively and innocent. Instead, let your description of the children racing down a slide suggest the idea of happiness, joy, and innocence. Remember that good poetry is about letting image become metaphor for the larger idea that you want to convey. For an added challenge, you could avoid all feeling words in these poems – instead rely on descriptions, images, and verbs that could suggest what mood or tone is at the heart of your village.

Consider your words your building blocks tonight; I know they may not be quite as cool as those colorful Lego blocks, but those are the tools you have to build this new "structure" that will reflect the heart of your village.

**Day 28**

**Plans and activities:** Begin by reading Seamus Heaney’s “Blackberry Picking” as an example of a poem that uses an object and detail to make a point about childhood rather than stating that point directly.(See Appendix for a copy of the poem.)

Share out poems and discuss the way that authors captured the essence of different villages. A quick way to share out is to have each student read his/ her poem and then to have students quickly “popcorn” (e.g. say out without raising hands) the three details that they found most memorable in the poem.

**Homework:** Read over options for final project and email me your preferences. Note: Having students read over final project ideas on their own and outside of class helps to ensure that students choose topics that they are interested in and allows you to create partners based on common interests. You could also go over the sheet in class and then have students email you their preferences for homework. I had students both read over the project sheet at home and email me their top three choices – both for time’s sake and because they were a responsible group. I still had questions the next day, just not as many. (See Appendix for final project information.)

**Day 29**

**Plans and activities:** Answer questions and assign groups. (Note: I was flexible in letting student students work with a partner if they expressed the same interest as another person in the class or letting them work independently if their was a unique interest.)

**Homework:** Complete planning sheet and draw up list of resources you will use to find out information about your topic.

**Day 30**

**Plans and activities:** Work day on final projects. Note: Throughout these workdays Dotty and I made sure to be available for conferences with each group so that we could answer questions, redirect, and help troubleshoot.)  **Homework:** Work on project.

**Day 31**

**Plans and activities:** Workday on final projects.

**Homework:** Work on project and finalize it for presentations.

**Day 32**

**Plans and activities:** Present final projects.