

**Please post in the chat when you  
come in:**

**What's your dream  
vacation?**

# Thematic Units in English



# Hello!

**I am Drea Laj**

I teach English, Drama, and Info Tech at Island ConnectEd.

I'm passionate about instructional design and teaching all things English!

You can find me at [@drea\\_laj](https://twitter.com/drea_laj) on twitter

# Norms for Today

Curiosity before judgement

Yes... and

Ignite your passion

Open doors

Stolen from Kim Darbyshire

# Small Group Introductions

When I put you into breakout rooms,  
please introduce yourself, what you  
teach, and one interesting fact about  
yourself.



# Shape of the Presentation

Who We Are

Instructional Design Process

New Media Course

Thematic Units

Time to Meet and Discuss Your Own Ideas

# Steal like an English Teacher

Our most creative and worthy moments in the classroom are often products of “Good Theft.”

Good theft happens when we “honor, study, steal from many, credit, transform, remix”.

Tara Seale and Dan Bruno

# About Us

Using the Whiteboard Tools, put a mark under each grade you teach

Grade 8

Grade 9

Grade 10

Grade 11

Grade 12

Other?





# About Us

Put a mark under the type of teaching you do

Face to Face

Online

Hybrid



# About Us

Put a mark under the courses you teach

Literary Studies

Creative Writing

New Media

Composition

Spoken Word



# English Curriculum



# 6 Strands of English Language Arts



Reading



Writing



Speaking



Listening



Viewing



Representing

Reading  
Listening  
Viewing

Writing  
Speaking  
Representing

# 6 Strands/5 Courses

- ☁ Composition
- ☁ Creative Writing
- ☁ Literary Studies
- ☁ New Media
- ☁ Spoken Word

- ★ Reading
- ★ Writing
- ★ Speaking
- ★ Listening
- ★ Viewing
- ★ Representing

Thumbs up/down: Do you feel like certain courses may naturally fit some of the strands?

# The focus of each of my courses

Literary Studies - Reading

Creative Writing - Writing

New Media - Viewing

# **INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PROCESS**

# Reflection: Favourite Units

On your own, take a moment to think about:

- What are your favourite activities to teach?

Jot them down in the comments.



# Reflection: Purpose

What do you want your students to be able to **Do**, **Know**, and **Remember** by the end of the course.

What **skills**, **knowledge**, and **understandings** do you want to develop through what you teach?

What are the **shared understandings** that you have from your department?

# Curriculum

Match the curriculum to your favourite units.

Look for holes.

# Curriculum Example

## Humanity and Nature

### Big Idea

**The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.**

### Pale Blue Dot

- Recognize and appreciate how various forms, formats, structures, and features of texts reflect a variety of purposes, audiences, and messages

### Nature Poems

- Recognize and understand the role of story, narrative, and oral tradition in expressing First Peoples perspectives, values, beliefs, and points of view

### There Will Come Soft Rains

- Reading strategies
- Recognize how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identities

### This Changes Everything

- Identify bias, contradictions, distortions, and omissions
- Recognize and understand the diversity within and across First Peoples societies as represented in texts
- Recognize the influence of land/place in First Peoples and other Canadian texts

# Resources

Gather resources to fill holes

Where do we find resources?

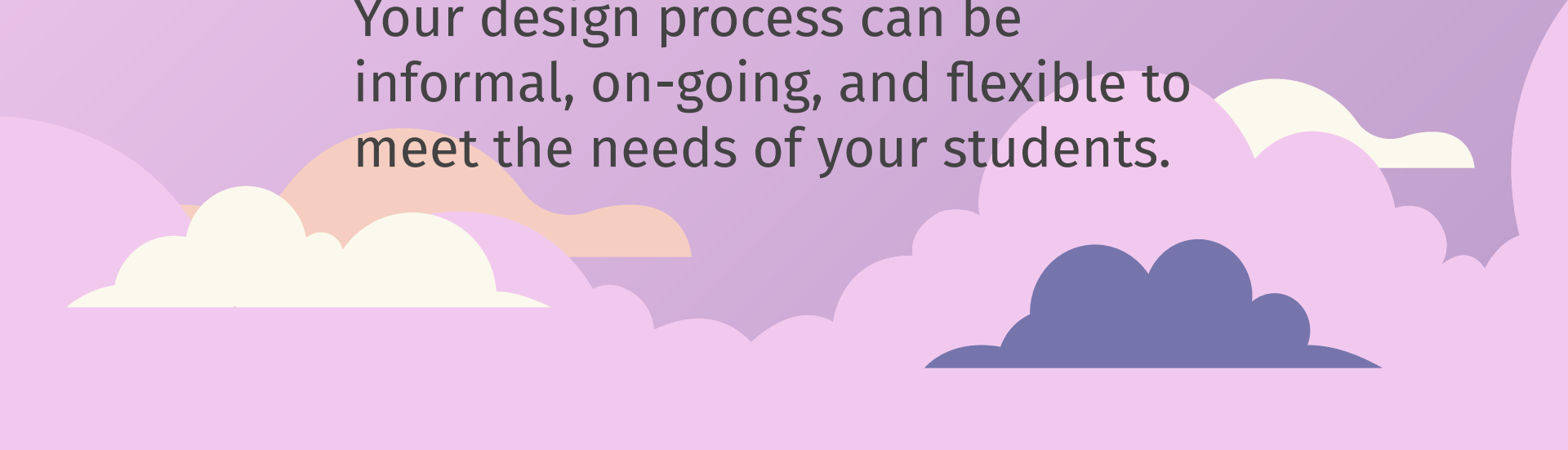
Share in the comments: Where are your go-to places for resources?

# Assessments

Build assessments that reflect your purpose

# Informal

Your design process can be informal, on-going, and flexible to meet the needs of your students.



# New Media

11

# Deciding my Favourite Units

Podcast Unit

Novel Study

TED Talk

Some of the poetry unit

Some of the short story unit



# Theme

Human Nature.

But each of the units also has a sci-fiction or futurist tone.

# Purpose

I want my students to examine tough social problems and make a decision about their role in them

I want my students to write formally and informally

I want my students to find beauty in stories

I want my students to see their role in shaping their environment



# Small Group Break Out

In Small Groups, discuss what are some of the things that you'd like your students to learn.

# Curriculum

I matched each part of the curriculum to the activities I wanted to do.

This will be something that you'll want to do on your own as it will require focus.



# Resources

Previous Courses you've taught

Colleagues

BCTELA Conference

The Internet

This is where you'll steal like an English Teacher



**5 Minute Break**

# Specifics

Let's get into the details



# The Course

5 Units - each one is one of the big ideas from the curriculum:

- ☁ Humanity and Nature
- ☁ Identity, Self, and the World
- ☁ Our Robotic Future
- ☁ Dystopian Detective
- ☁ Exploration of Language

# Humanity and Nature

## Poetry and Documentary

**Big Idea:** People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives

### Questions to think about as the students work:

- How does living in an urban setting affect our connection with the natural world?
- What effect does the natural world have on the individual?
- What is humanity's proper relationship with nature?

# Texts

- ☁ Pale Blue Dot
- ☁ Peace of the Wild Things
- ☁ The World is Too Much With Us
- ☁ Statl'limx Fishing: Night Air
- ☁ This Changes Everything
- ☁ Optional Text: There Will Come Soft Rains

# Purpose

## **Pale Blue Dot**

Think: about our place in the world. Students to connect to their feelings about what Carl Sagan was saying. Do something with those feelings.

## **Nature Poems**

Think about the role of nature. Students to connect imagery in poetry with representations of art. Write about how lives can be improved through nature in a formal paragraph using poems as sources.

## **This Changes Everything**

Think about the impact of human endeavours on the environment. I want them to examine bias - both their own and the narrator's. I want them to react critically to what they view.

# Assessment

In this unit, I have a variety of assessments:

I have questions, paragraph responses, and I have representations.

## Summary Assessment

### **Essay**

In the essay, I want students to learn a specific format. Using the P.E.E structure. Point, Evidence, and Explain. This format works well for teaching students at a distance and in person.

The goal with the essay is to form answer from one of the questions at the start of the unit using the sources in this unit.

# Comment

In the comments, what are some other texts that would fit humanity and nature theme?

H/N:

# Identity, Others, and the World

Movie or novel analysis

**Big Idea:** People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives

**Students generate 3 questions about human nature.**

# Texts

## The Books (Students Select 1)

- ☁ The Lord of the Flies
- ☁ Shadows Cast by Stars
- ☁ The Martian
- ☁ Ender's Game
- ☁ Life of Pi
- ☁ The Chrysalids
- ☁ Oryx and Crake

## Compare Movie to Book

- ☁ The Lord of the Flies
- ☁ The Martian
- ☁ Ender's Game
- ☁ Life of Pi
- ☁ Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban

## The Movies (Pick 2)

- ☁ Inception
- ☁ The Martian
- ☁ The Matrix
- ☁ Interstellar
- ☁ Avengers
- ☁ Serenity
- ☁ The Incredibles
- ☁ Inside Out
- ☁ Big Hero 6



# Purpose

To encourage students to see how the stories we read and watch can answer the questions we have about life.

To see the parallels between reading and watching fiction with purpose and intent.

To use strategies that are common for both reading and watch to make sense of story.

To make connections between self, text, and world

# Assessments

Rules of Notice (For Reading and for Watching)

Character, Setting, and Symbol analysis

Visual Essay demonstrate their understanding of the text and answer a question that they created at the beginning of the unit.

# Do you teach a novel in New Media?

Happy Face - I do or would teach a novel in New Media

Heart - I don't teach a novel or would like to try teaching a film instead

# Our Robotic Future

Non-fiction and New Media Campaign

**Big Idea:** Digital citizenship requires both knowledge of digital technology and awareness of its impact on individuals and society.

# Texts

- ☁ The Real Cyborgs
- ☁ What Will Humans look like in 100 years?
- ☁ Antihypoxiant
- ☁ What is AI?
- ☁ Can We Build AI without losing Control?
- ☁ Do Robots Deserve Rights?

# Purpose

Through near-future and futuristic texts, students will explore ideas about what they want to see in their future.

To examine non-fiction and video based texts using analysis skills.

Then they will use what they have learned to create a compelling project using new media techniques that will either positively influence the viewer to do what they want or use negative emotions to scare the viewer.

# Assessments

Using a chart to make notes

Using a chart to examine character traits (Thinks, Says, Does, and Feels)

Using questions to ask students to think about what they watch

Final Project is to take what they learned to create either a positive or negative presentation using New Media techniques (positive would be advocacy and community building, negative is propaganda and manipulation)



Other Texts?

Post in the comments, other texts that would fit this theme?

RF:



# Dystopia Detective

Podcast and note taking

**Big Idea:** Texts are socially, culturally, geographically, and historically constructed.

**Students are given the role of a scientist. They must examine these tapes and provide a spoken response to the Head of Security about what happened to the patient.**



# Texts

Within the Wires

# Purpose

To have students listen with intent.

To learn how to take notes and then use those notes to create a summary.

To learn how to take on a different role

To match their tone to expected presentation format

# Assessments

Notes - taken in twice.

Longer form of this unit has tasks as well - tasks deepen student understanding.

Voicemail

# Podcasts

Thumbs up if you use Podcasts as literature or would like to use Podcasts in your course.



# Exploration of Language

TED Talk

**Big Idea:** Language shapes ideas and influences others.

# Purpose

To develop students' inquiry questions

To Develop students' research skills

To hear them speak

To give them more practice with giving presentations

# Assessment

Inquiry Question

Research

Works Cited

TED Talk Presentation



## Presentation Pieces

Post in the comments, ways that we can make students feel comfortable when giving presentations

# Short Break

When we return from the break, there will be 5 breakout rooms - one for each course.

This is to give you time to talk to your peers about your courses and how you may use some of the ideas you learned today in your courses.

At the end of the presentation are links to all my course outlines so you can see my resources and begin your own good theft.

Come back at noon.



# Small Group Discussion

I will set up 5 break out rooms, one for each course.  
Please feel free to move between the rooms as  
needed.



Come back for Closing

At 12:00 pm, we will come back for sharing and closing comments.



# Share Out

Post your social media and emails in the chat.



# Passion

Teach what you are passionate about!

Teach what you are interested in!

Teach the questions you have!

# Questions

???





We don't have to do all of it alone.  
We were never meant to.

- Brene Brown





A large, stylized pink cloud graphic with a scalloped edge, positioned on the left side of the slide. The word "Thanks!" is written in a bold, dark blue font inside the cloud.

**Thanks!**

You can find me at on:

Twitter: @drea\_laj

Email: [drea.laj@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:drea.laj@sd68.bc.ca)

## Links to Course Resources

[New Media Full Course Outline](#)

[Literary Studies Full Course Outline](#)

[Creative Writing Full Course Outline](#) (old)

[Creative Writing Full Course Outline](#) (week based)