



SF/F in the classroom

With a focus on the Australian Curriculum for Year
Seven

Assumptions

1. The Australian Curriculum is worth working to.
2. Year 7 is a good place to start; the rest of the secondary school curriculum builds on its foundation.
3. Science fiction and fantasy texts are inherently worthwhile in themselves and have something to offer our students.

About me

- Teacher for six years (English and History)
- Taught English from Year 7-10
- Avid SFF reader

Why bother?

- Influence your governing body.
- Influence your English faculties.
- Influence individual students.

Literature and context

- Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts.

Literature and context

- *Identify and explore ideas...* is what science fiction is all about.
 - Can tie into analysis of issues, too; eg Flowers for Algernon and genetic testing, IVF, abortion.
- ... *texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts: SFF meets this!*
 - futuristic texts allow for discussions of society that can otherwise be difficult.
 - texts from a completely foreign world allow a similar thing.

Ideas?

- Flowers for Algernon, by Daniel Keyes
- Spider Lies, by Jen Banyard (rec. by Tehani Wessely – space, NASA, genetics)
- Scott Westerfeld's Uglies series (rec. by a number of people)
- What else?

Responding to literature

- Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view.
- Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts.
- Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage.

Responding to literature

- *Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts... mainstream literature does not have a monopoly on well-drawn characters and settings!*
- *Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts. Vampires: Meyer vs Stoker? A study of witches: Baum vs Maguire!*

Ideas?

- Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, and "Ass-hat Magic Spider" from *Starry Rift*.
- Pratchett's Tiffany Aching books
- What else?

Responding to literature cont.

- *Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage.*
Especially if you have students who are **and** are not avid readers of SFF, this could lead to a very interesting discussion.
- Students could survey the library shelves, other students, and staff on their attitudes, and report back...

Examining literature

- Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches.
- Understand, interpret and discuss how language is compressed to produce a dramatic effect in film or drama, and to create layers of meaning in poetry, for example haiku, tankas, couplets, free verse and verse novels.

Examining literature

- *Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches. First and third-person narratives; present and past tense; un/reliable narrators...*
- *Understand, interpret and discuss how language is compressed to produce a dramatic... Or in comics/graphic novels?*
 - *SFF films such as *The Fifth Element* use compressed language.*

Ideas

- Liar, Justine Larbalestier (probably not year 7)
- Graphic novels/comics
- What else?

Creating literature

- Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition.
- Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour.

Creating literature

- ... *adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint...*
- Pirates of the Caribbean unit. Creative writing section adapts point of view. Connects to “Literacy: creating texts”:
 - Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language... features to convey information and ideas.