**Unit plan for Klee Wyck by Emily Carr**

Quick lesson ideas using a variety of multimedia teaching methods.

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**PLO’s – Grade 12 English Language Arts**

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| A2 – Express ideas and information in a variety of situations and forms to   * Explore and respond * Recall and describe * Narrate and explain * Argue, persuade and critique * Support and extend * Engage and entertain | A9 – Speak and listen to, interpret, analyse and evaluate ideas and information from texts, by   * Examining and comparing ideas and concepts among texts * Critiquing the author’s logic, quality of evidence and coherence * Describing and critiquing perspectives * Identifying and challenging bias, contradictions and distortions * Explaining the importance and impact of historical, social and political contexts |

A great way for students to interpret and analyze new texts is to engage in a Literature circle activity with guiding questions. Literature circle discussions, in their various forms, are a great way for students to express their thoughts and opinions without the teacherly ‘judgement’ students may feel when answering directly to a teacher. Lit circles allow students to bounce ideas off one another and explore thoughts or ideas they have not been able to fully develop on their own. Guiding questions may help the conversation develop in specific directions and ensure particular things are discussed in the lead up to a class discussion or project assignment.

The method of literature circle that I like the most is through an online forum. This way you, as the teacher, can interact with all groups at once and their discussions stay more closely focused on the topic. Going off topic is not necessarily a bad thing, as conversation development can take many paths, but keeping the discussion on the text at hand will allow the most productive use of time. Online discussions allow the teacher to interject with questions or ideas to guide or jumpstart the conversation as well.

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| B1 – Read, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a wide variety of literary texts, including   * Literature reflecting a variety of times, places and perspectives * Literature reflecting a variety of prose forms * Poetry in a variety of forms * Significant works of Canadian literature * Traditional forms from Aboriginal, and other cultures * Student- generated material | B2 – read, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a wide variety of information and persuasive texts with increasing complexity and subtlety of ideas and form such as   * Biographies and autobiographies * Etc. |

Reading this text will expose students to both “Literature reflecting a variety of times, places and perspectives”; “Literature reflecting a variety of prose forms”; “Significant works of Canadian Literature”; and it explores some of the perspectives of Aboriginal groups. Few teachers study Emily Carr as a literature resource, and few Canadians know of her writing or even of her as an artist. I believe she should be represented as a major part of Canadian history, literature and art. Klee Wyck in particular is part autobiography and features snapshots of Carr’s adolescent life which may make it more appealing to students.

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| B3 – View, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts with increasing complexity and subtlety of ideas and form such as   * Art * Etc. |

It would be great to visit an art gallery for this lesson, and the Art Gallery of Victoria has an entire gallery space dedicated to Emily Carr’s works. Here you can see her development from her beginnings as an artist, travels to France and her return to Vancouver Island to paint her interpretations of Aboriginal villages and totems. Many sections of Emily Carr’s “Klee Wyck” discuss experiences painting totems and village scenes. It would be interesting to have students try to match up a selection of her artworks to reading selections. Reading her memoirs of the experience and then seeing the resulting artwork would be a great lead up to a discussion within the class of different representations of a singular event or object. This could lead into a discussion of how representations of an event or object can vary.

If it is not possible to visit a gallery space, there are online resources to view artworks. Google has a gallery of artwork at www.googleartproject.com. Art work being made available online has greatly benefitted people all over the world, as no longer do you need to travel to a city to see one specific piece. They can be found in books and on the internet for all to see.

Emily Carr’s art works range in their influences, medium, subject matter and talent and exploring these diversities from one artist will expand students’ range of knowledge and understanding of the arts.

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| B9 – Interpret, analyse and evaluate ideas and information from texts, by   * Critiquing logic, quality of evidence and coherence * Identifying and describing diverse voices * Critiquing perspectives * Identifying and challenging bias, contradictions, distortions and non represented perspectives * Explaining the importance and impact of social, political; and historical contexts |

Video is becoming a popular teaching method in today’s classrooms. Students not only get to present material to their classmates, they can do it in a variety of styles by creating a video. This will also be a preferred method for students who are shy or don’t like to speak in front of an audience. It is not a good idea to allow students to get out of oral presentations by doing a video, as public speaking is an essential skill, but it is a great lead up to an oral presentation project to get students more comfortable with speaking in front of others.

Students could create a video to make a “PSA” about whether or not students agree with Emily’s perspective or bias and whether or not other people should read the book. There are many routes to be explored but classroom discussions or literature circle activities can help narrow options for students to pursue. Some themes that could be covered include: Aboriginals, feminism, art, appropriation, history of British Columbia and colonialism.

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| B12 – Recognize and explain how structure and features of text shape readers and viewers construction of meaning and appreciation of author’s craft, including   * Form and genre * Functions of text * Literary elements * Literary devices * Use of language * Non-fiction elements * Visual/artistic devices |

Emily’s prose style is very poetic and can be discussed at great length in the typical efferent style of English classes. While not an optimal schooling device it is still essential, especially for Provincially Examinable Courses. There are words used in Klee Wyck that are not appropriate by today’s standards, such as ‘Indian’. Discussing why these words were used then and why they are not appropriate now could be supplemented by watching a video on Aboriginal history or mis-portrayal.

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| B13 – Demonstrate increasing word skills and vocabulary knowledge, by   * Analysing the origins and roots of words * Determining meanings and uses of words based on context, including connotation and denotation * Discerning nuances in meaning of words considering social, political, historical and literary contexts |

To continue the last conversation, you could discuss why Emily Carr wrote using the term “Indians” rather than the currently politically correct terms, “First Nations”, “Aboriginal” or “Indigenous”. Why was this and what her intentions with this word? Were our current politically correct terms being used during her time?

Who came up with the word “Indian” What are the origins of the term. Why is it still used in government documents? A web exploration of ‘media smarts’ using the website: <http://mediasmarts.ca/diversity-media/aboriginal-people/common-portrayals-aboriginal-people> can help students explore media portrayals of Aboriginals, and other groups. Many activities could be designed around a website ‘treasure hunt’ or worksheet that requires students to navigate a site to gain information.

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| C1 – Write meaningful personal texts that elaborate on ideas and information to   * Experiment * Express self * Make connections * Reflect and respond * Remember and recall | C3 – Write effective imaginative texts to develop ideas and information to   * Strengthen connections and insights * Explore and adapt literary forms and techniques * Experiment with increasingly sophisticated language and style * Engage and entertain |

Journaling exercises about thoughts and questions brought up through readings and classroom discussions can be used throughout the course. I love the idea of a short journal entry being a ‘ticket out the door’. Having students incorporate their own memoirs in draft form in their journals could be great preparation for a short writing assignment.