

Philip and the Butterfly Lesson Plan

By Louise Sarrasin, Educator
Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM), Montréal (Québec)

Objective

To enable students to make connections between who they are, what they experience in their relationships with others and the environment, and the decisions they make in these relationships.

Target audience

Students aged 6 to 9

Connections

Languages and literature
Arts and culture
Personal development

Film needed for lesson plan

– *Philip and the Butterfly* (5 min 14 s)

Summary

This lesson plan will enable students to understand that there are connections between who they are, what they experience in their relationships with others and the environment, and the decisions they make in these relationships. They will be able to express their views when discussing the experience of the character in the film *Philip and the Butterfly* (see note) with their fellow students.

Preparatory Activity: When a fable becomes a story

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Step 1: Start this activity by reading aloud the fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* by Jean de La Fontaine. This activity will show students that a fable is a story written in rhyme, containing a moral and generating an emotion in the listener or reader. Fables make us think about moral issues and help us examine a problem or a situation from a certain point of view. Have students explain their understanding of this fable and describe the emotions it stirs.

Step 2: Ask students what they know about butterflies and their transformation. Ask them also if they have ever collected insects or other things. Explain that they are going to see and hear the story of a young collector, told in a very special way. Show the first few minutes of the film *Philip and the Butterfly* (from the start to 23 s) and ask them to pay special attention to the narrator, who says these words at the beginning of the film: “This is a true story, most of it anyway.” Have students look at the drawings that accompany these words, with a view to thinking about the following questions: *Why did the filmmaker choose to show us these drawings while the film title scrolls down the screen? What clues does the film’s title give us about the story?* Ask students to compare the different versions of the story, as told in the fable and in the film. To conclude this activity, ask students to get in pairs and invent a short story about the

insect of their choice. The younger students can do this orally; the older ones can write their story in the style of a fable. Ask some teams to share their stories with the whole class.

ACTIVITY: A Flighty Friendship!

Approximate duration: 75 minutes

Step 1: Start the activity with a review of the preparatory activity, especially the butterfly's transformation and the characteristics of an insect collection. Show the film (from the start to 1 min 5 s). Ask the students the following questions: How does the filmmaker show Philip discovering his passionate interest in insects? What types of images are used? How does the narrator do this? What words does the narrator use? How and where does Philip discover the caterpillar? What does it look like? What does the boy want to do with his find? Would you have acted in the same way? Why? What does the image of the trophy help us to understand?

Step 2: Continue showing the film (from 1 min 5 s to 2 min 57 s). Ask the students how the caterpillar changed and which images show this transformation. Ask them to discuss Philip's reaction to this transformation and what they would have done in his place. When Philip believes he is witnessing a miracle, what does he say to himself out loud (*The gold is mine*)? What do you think of his reaction? How do we know that Philip wants to enter the butterfly in a competition (*image of the trophy*)? What makes him change his mind? Ask students to comment on the film's images and words that explain the boy's change in attitude and ask them what they think of them. Why does Philip want to keep his discovery a secret? Which images in the film let us understand that the butterfly and Philip are friends?

Step 3: Continue showing the film (from 2 min 57 s to 3 min 43 s) and gather the impressions of your students about the images that show the butterfly's death. Continue showing the film (from 2 min 57 s to 3 min 43 s) to enable them to observe that the images turn blue when Philip tells his parents he is feeling sad. Ask the students why the filmmaker has chosen to do this and how this affects them. Show them the passage in which Philip makes the promise "I am done collecting insects!" Ask them to comment on this promise by having them explain why the images return to their colours after this promise is made.

Step 4: Conclude the film by asking students to comment on Philip's sentence, as the moral of the story: "I am done collecting insects!" In their opinion, what makes the boy say this? What lesson does he learn from this experience and how will he change the way he sees things? What does he want to be when he grows up? How does this story make the students think about their own lives? Conclude by asking these questions: Which images had the greatest impact on you? What do you feel when you listen to the music? What does the music add to the film? How did you imagine the film would end? What did you like best about this film? Why? What does this film mean to you?

Recap

Suggested duration: 45 minutes

Ask students to tell a story, in words or in images, about a moral dilemma or something painful they have experienced in their own lives.

Reflective sharing

Students ought to be able to explain Philip's experience with his butterfly and the impact of their friendship on his life.

Note: This lesson plan has been designed for students of various age groups. You can adapt it to meet the needs of your students by selecting those questions that are age-appropriate for your group.

Webography

- The Monarchs without Borders section of the *Montréal Insectarium* website for teachers who wish to experiment with a butterfly-raising kit in their class or for more information on butterflies in general:

www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/insectarium/en/index.php?section=74&intParent=12

- The *Montreal Insectarium* website:

www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/insectarium/en/index.php

- Works by Jean de La Fontaine

www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/l#a1758

- Jean de La Fontaine Museum (Currently in French only, but soon in English)

www.la-fontaine-ch-thierry.net