Preparation for Literature Discussion - Curricular Engagement Cards

**Purpose:** To help students have a useful and rich literature discussion that is based on participation of all members of the group.

**Directions:**

1. Students should read a novel over 3-4 weeks.
2. Provide students with handout (page 2-3)
3. Each week explain a new type of card- Quote, Character, or Moral Dilemma.
4. Students should complete the card for homework.
5. When students meet in groups they share their card including their response. They elicit reaction from the other students.
6. Students go around the circle with each student sharing their card.
7. When all cards have been read and discussed students have an open discussion about their book.
8. It is also helpful to have each student bring a question they want to ask their group about the book.

**Note:** When all students must prepare a card for the discussion, it provides a routine where each session begins with everyone participating not just observing.
Preparation for Literature Discussion -Curricular Engagement Cards-

You will have three assignments with your new fiction book where you must complete a three by five card, share it in your literature discussion group and turn it in. Your three assignments will include:

1. **Significant Quote**-This card contains a powerful or meaningful quote you found in the book. You will need a quote and your reaction to it- What does this quote mean to you?

2. **Character Description**-On this card You will describes a character either through something he or she says or does. You can also use the comments made about him or her by other characters in the book. On the back of the card you will write your reaction to the quote.

3. **Moral Dilemma Card** On this card you explain a moral dilemma one of the characters must face. On the back of the card you will explain what you think the character should do or should have done. Include an explanation of why you feel as you do.

I will not accept cards unless they are turned in when you come to class the day they are do. You may not write them during class. They will not be accepted as late assignments.

Examples of each are given below. Your cards should be similar in length and quality.

**SIGNIFICANT QUOTE CARD**

**Ex. 1 Quote (front of card):**

“Damn!” I heard them cursing themselves. Then a car with a siren and flashing red light came on the bridge. It was Vigil, the state policeman who patrolled our town.

**Reaction (back of card):**

I think the kids knew there had been a big accident and there would be a lot of tension and worry until everyone found out who was hurt and how badly. They are anxious to get over to the scene right away. I think they should stay out of the way. Extra people just make it harder to deal with a crisis.

**Ex. 2 Quote:** “I hadn’t sent the letter; I hadn’t made the phone call; I guess I was waiting for Labor Day to come and go, for my mother and aunts to drive by the empty house and know Frank had been right, that I was away on a trip and wouldn’t be back for a long time”

**Reaction:** I think she is trying to avoid dealing with her mother and other relatives. I think she feels sad that she had to finally leave the house but she thinks none of them would understand so she doesn’t want to listen to them. I think I would have at least explained things. Maybe a letter would do.
**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION CARD**

**Ex. 1-Character Description:**
Her mother finally admitted it. She had no money. She had lost her job weeks ago and she had planned to pay the bills when she got another one. She had spent all the family money she had inherited. Her mom never followed through though on things, so the family money was lost just like everything else.

**Reaction:**
Her mother is so irresponsible. She has so many problems and she has now left her family in a crisis. They are going to be evicted from their home and she doesn’t even care. She is pretty worthless as a head of household and mother.

**Ex. 2- Character Description:**
Ultima was a curandera, a woman who knew the herbs and remedies of the ancients, a miracle worker who could heal the sick. And I heard that Ultima could lift the curses laid by brujas, that she could exorcise the evil the witches planted in people to make them sick.

**Reaction:**
Ultima was a special person in the town. Everyone respected her except those who misunderstood her and were afraid of her powers. Everyone sought her out when they had difficulties. She was wise and gave lots of good advice. People want to protect her but keep their distance.

**MORAL DILEMMA CARD**

**Ex. 1-Moral Dilemma:**
In this book the main character has just been chosen to become a Gisha Girl. Her family is poor and they have sold her. She will gain much prestige in this position but she will more or less be owned by others for the rest of her life. She has to decide whether to accept her position or to attempt to run away and keep her freedom. Her family will have lots of problems if she does this.

**Reaction:**
I think I would find it hard to accept a lifetime commitment to this type of position. I think you would have to be living in this culture to understand it. I think she should have run away. By the end of the book, she has lost many years of her life and has suffered a great deal because of taking on this role.

**Ex. 2-Moral Dilemma :**
Nicki is a single mother and a lawyer. She struggles to get by because she often gets roped into working for clients who have no money to pay her. A teenager seeks Nicki’s help because she has been arrested in the death of her rich uncle. She claims she is innocent but needs help to prove it. Her mother is highly irresponsible and unemployed so Nicki knows she will never be paid. Her dilemma is deciding whether to take on the case.

**Reaction:**
I think Nicki should help her. Once she started investigating this story it appears some of the people involved are crooks and are using this young girl as a scapegoat. She really has no way to defend herself which the true murderer knows. Her own family is of no help either. Nicki could be the girl’s last chance to have a fair and just trial.