



Gwendolyn!

By Juliette MacIver

Illustrated by Terri Rose Baynton

Book Summary:

In the jungle there are jaguars, monkeys and parrots aplenty, but there are no penguins. None at all. Because penguins do not live in the jungle, except for ... GWENDOLYN!

A story about friendship, adventure and finding your home.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

Australian Curriculum

English: ACELA1426 ACELA1429

Inquiry and Skills: ACHASSI001, ACHASSI002, ACHASSI003, ACHASSI005, ACHASSI008, ACHASSI010

Geography: ACHASSK014, ACHASSK015

Science: ACSSU002

Health and PE: ACPPS001, ACPPS004, ACPPS005

International Baccalaureate PYP

Concepts: Form, Connection, Perspective

Transdisciplinary Skills:

Thinking (Acquisition of knowledge, Comprehension); Communication (Reading, Writing, Presenting); Research (Formulating questions, Collecting data, Organising data, Presenting research findings)

Appropriate Ages:

2-5

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Notes by Nadia McCallum

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About the Author

Juliette MacIver is a former musician who lives in Wellington, New Zealand. Her previous picture books include *Marmaduke Duck and the Marmalade Jam* (shortlisted for the NZ Post Children's Book Awards) and *Queen Alice's Palaces*.

About the Illustrator

Terri Rose Baynton lives in the beautiful seaside town of Waihi Beach, New Zealand, amongst good friends, warm waves and a menagerie of animals. She is a scriptwriter and storyliner for children's television, working with Weta Productions on *Jane and the Dragon* and *The WotWots*, alongside her father, *WotWots* creator Martin Baynton.

Study Notes on Themes and Curriculum Areas

Themes and key discussion points

Belonging/Identity

At its heart, *Gwendolyn* is the story of a little penguin who wants to find where she belongs. She battles with knowing where she should be and where her heart lies. When Parrot asks her if she has ever been to Antarctica, the inevitable occurs and Gwendolyn questions whether she is living in the right place. The mood of the book changes, as Gwendolyn loses her positivity and she begins to question her identity. This is a great book to prompt discussions about what makes us who we are and whether the things that make us, us, are transient and change, or whether they will be with us throughout all our life. Are we still us if we live in another country? What changes? What stays the same? What about when we go from being a child to an adult? How will that change us? Will we still be the same person? Can friends change us? How much of who we are is based on our family? Our friendship choices? Or history and culture? There are so many questions to explore!

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This is covered in more detail when looking at the Health and Physical Education key learning areas.

Perspective

Gwendolyn sees things differently to her friends. Her different view point enables her to cheer them up. What problems do her friends have? How does Gwendolyn see it differently? What happens when Gwendolyn gets upset? What makes her happy again? How is this different from her friends' experience?

This book is an empowering story for younger readers. Gwendolyn does not rely on anyone to make her happy. She discovers and makes observations for herself. She decides what she needs to be happy. Gwendolyn looks critically at her life, assessing all the different facets of it, before realising the combination of things that make her who she is and what makes her happy. She does not let others tell her who she is or where she needs to be. Instead making that decision for herself. This is in stark contrast to her friends.

Needs and Wants

Each character in the book is unhappy about something. Jaguar complains that it's too hot to hunt. Monkey complains that the bananas are too squishy. Parrot doesn't have a wife. While Gwendolyn is able to help each animal to look on the bright side, each animal has raised some very valid issues that could be considered.

Jaguar: How does climate affect our food? How does climate affect our ability to do things? Jaguar thinks it's too hot to hunt. Are there things that we cannot/should not do in heat?

Monkey: Could Monkey eat squishy bananas? Or does he just not like them? (He doesn't want to.) Gwendolyn highlights that there are a lot of bananas to choose from. Is this a real problem for Monkey?

Parrot: Why might Parrot be unable to find a wife? Do we all need to have a partner/friend in life? Why do people need/want partners? Is having a friend/partner always a good thing?

Curriculum areas and key learning outcomes

a) Language Conventions

ACELA1429 Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes.

ACELA1432 Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that for capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences.

ACELA1786 Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts.

ACELT1575 Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences.

ACELT1783 Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.

ACELT1578 Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text.

ACELY1648 Identify some differences between imaginative and informative texts.

ACELY1650 Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently.

How do we know what the different animals feel? What words tell us? How is the text formatted to show us? e.g. "Gwendolyn *loves* the jungle. She loves the hot, humid air." Use of the word love, italics, and repetition to reinforce.

In the book Jaguar, Monkey and Parrot are not just the names of the animals (common nouns) but also used for their names (proper nouns). How do we know this?

When Gwendolyn talks, the punctuation of an exclamation mark is often used. Explore the possible reasons for this. What effect does it have on the story? Why do you think the author chose to do this?

Create a story board, detailing the main events in the book. Highlight when the complication in the story appears. How is it resolved?

Explore the environment of the jungle in contrast to Antarctica and the characteristics of the different animals that Gwendolyn wishes to share – could this happen in reality? Could a penguin really live in the jungle? Could a penguin really fly with wings made from leaves? Where does fact become fiction? How has the author used fact with fiction to create the storyline? The complication?

b) International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme

These are the suggested Key Concepts and related concepts from the IB PYP, however, these concepts can be used as a basis for inquiry in any curriculum.

Key Concept: Form, Connection and Perspective

Related Concepts: Form (structure, similarities, differences);

Connection (relationships, networks, interdependence);

Perspective (beliefs, opinion)

Related Concepts (Geography): diversity, discovery, geography, impact, conservation, ecology, interdependence.

Related Concepts (Personal, Social and Physical Education): character, belonging, community, conformity, interdependence, safety.

These concepts are explored through a variety of activities. Following are learning experiences which link to the Australian Curriculum. Within each learning experience, I have linked the key concept and related concepts.

c) Geography: My Personal World

Inquiry and Skills: ACHASSI001, ACHASSI002, ACHASSI003, ACHASSI005, ACHASSI008, ACHASSI010

Geography: ACHASSK014 The representation of the location of places and their features on simple maps and models.

ACHASSK015 The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important. *(Although in this book we are looking at animals, the skill is the same)*

Science: ACSSU002 Living things have basic needs, including food and water.

With all the activities, take note of the questions children ask. Write them up on a wall. Check in to see if you are answering their questions. Explore what makes a 'good' question.

Make a list of the animals found in the book. Where are these animals found? Are they found in more than one country? Can you find their picture and plot them on a world map? What other animals are typically found in these areas? Why do you think these animals are found in these areas and not others?

(Key Concept: Connection. Related concepts: diversity, geography, ecology)

Jigsaw activity: Individually, or in groups, students answer the following about one animal from the book. Then compile the research as a class, to develop a matrix showing the information for all four animals.

(Key Concepts: Form and Connection. Related concepts: diversity, conservation, ecology, impact, interdependence)

Name of animal (Challenge: What is their scientific name? The origin of their name?)

Conservation status

Life Span

What type of vertebrate is it?

Location

Climate (temperature, humidity, rainfall)

What do they eat?

What about them, makes them suited for living here?

What role does it have in the ecosystem? (e.g. The Jaguar is an apex predator and a keystone species. Their disproportionately large effect on their environment makes them critical in stabilising the ecosystem and regulating the population of other animals in the ecosystem, both directly and indirectly.)

Explore the impact humans have had on each animal's ecosystem. How does this make you feel? What do you think about this? What new wonderings do you have? What is being done to rectify impact humans have had?

(Key Concept: Connection and Perspective. Related concepts: geography, ecology, conservation, interdependence, safety, beliefs, opinion)

Online resources: worldwildlife.org, nationalgeographic.com, rainforest-alliance.org, polardiscoverywho.edu, seaworld.org, animaldiversity.org

d) Health and Physical Education: Personal, social and community health

ACPPS001 Identify personal strengths

ACPPS004 Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others

ACPPS005 Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations

Why is it so important to Gwendolyn that her friends are happy?

(Key Concepts: Connection and Perspective. Related Concepts: relationships, character, belonging, community)

Explore how Gwendolyn seeks to understand other people's points of view, and how she helps them understand hers. Gwendolyn, observes, asks questions and participates with them. She does that before she offers her point of view. Why is this

so important? How can this be applied to us? What can we learn from Gwendolyn to help us understand others better? Write about a situation where you could apply what you've learnt from how Gwendolyn seeks to understand others. Role play the situation.

(Key Concepts: Form and Perspective. Related Concepts: character, belonging, community, conformity)

Is Gwendolyn a good friend? What qualities does she have that make her a good friend? Are you a good friend? What qualities do you have that make you a good friend? Do all 'good' friends have the same qualities, or can they be different for different people and circumstances?

(Key Concepts: Form and Perspective. Related Concepts: relationships, character, belonging, community, conformity)

Parrot asks Gwendolyn if she has ever been to Antarctica. This causes Gwendolyn to think about her life. How does Gwendolyn feel after Parrot's question? How do you know that Gwendolyn is feels that way? Why does Parrot's question cause such an emotional response from Gwendolyn?

(Key Concepts: Form and Perspective. Related Concepts: relationships, character, belonging, community, conformity)

When Gwendolyn becomes upset after Parrot's question, how does she respond? Does she retreat, or does she react proactively and positively? What can we learn from her resolve to travel to Antarctica and find out about how her life would be, if she lived there?

(Key Concepts: Form and Perspective. Related Concepts: relationships, character, belonging, community, conformity)

When Gwendolyn plays with Monkey, we learn that Monkey *always* wins the game of chase, "But Gwendolyn doesn't mind." Why do you think Gwendolyn doesn't mind? Would it bother you if one of your friends 'always won'? Why/Why not?

(Key Concepts: Connection and Perspective. Related Concepts: relationships, character, belonging, community)

Parrot asks Gwendolyn to come flying with him. But penguins cannot fly. Does this stop Gwendolyn? What does she do about it? What does this tell us about Gwendolyn's character? What in your life has the potential to stop you from achieving? Make a list as a class of all the road blocks you might encounter that stop you from achieving what you want to do. What can you do about it?

(Key Concepts: Perspective. Related Concepts: beliefs, opinions, relationships, character, community)

How is our classroom like Gwendolyn's home? Explore the similarities and differences between Gwendolyn's jungle home and the classroom. Don't be limited to just the physical features. Focus also on the inter-personnel. What makes each a community?

(Key Concepts: Form and Perspective. Related Concepts: similarities, differences, networks, diversity, belonging, community, conformity, interdependence)

Bibliography

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting documentation

Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education (2009)

About the Author of the Teachers' Notes

Nadia McCallum completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Psychology and Sociology, before going on to complete a Masters of Teaching which she finished with Honours. She has taught in the Catholic, Government and Independent school systems at a

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Primary School level. Nadia has a special interest in the explicit teaching of thinking skills in order to develop critical thinkers who actively explore, engage with and learn about the world around them and themselves. Nadia works as an education consultant advising schools and speaking at conferences on curriculum differentiation and assessment.