The Alchemist Lesson Plan

Subject Area: Language Arts

Reading Level: Advanced

Book Summary
Santiago is content as a shepherd in the hills of Spain, until one day when he has a dream of finding treasure buried in the pyramids. Leaving his serene life, he goes to find his personal legend and live out his dream. On his quest he encounters a cast of characters who show him the simple truths of the world and the importance of following your dreams.

Objective
To present persuasive arguments in support of an opinion.
Standard: The student conveys a clear main point when speaking to others and stays on the topic being discussed. The student evaluates strategies used by speakers in oral presentations (e.g., persuasive techniques, verbal messages supported by nonverbal techniques, effect of word choice, use of slanted or biased material).

Warm-up Activity
Throughout the novel, the boy remembers certain "truths" the king said to him. For example, the king says, "When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it" (p. 42). Ask students in writing to either disagree or agree with this statement, using examples from their own life or literature to prove their points. Have volunteers share their answers.

Teaching Plan
After Reading Materials

- Index cards
- Bag

1. Tell students to search for the truths that the king and other characters say to the boy throughout the novel. They should write down each quote on an index card or small piece of paper.
2. Put the quotes in a bag and separate students into groups of four or five. Have one student from each group pick a quote from the bag and read the quote out loud to the group. Tell them to quickly write down (three minutes) whether they agree with the quote, and provide an example that proves their point of view.
3. After three minutes, tell students that their group should discuss the quote and their individual points of view about it. They may change their point of view. Have students come to a consensus and appoint one member of the group to present their opinion to the class.
4. After a few quotes have been discussed, the teacher should ask what are the characteristics of a good verbal argument (such as good examples to prove a point; strong, firm voice; eye contact, etc.). List the characteristics of a good verbal presentation on the board and discuss. Present students with another quote and have them try to incorporate the techniques listed.
5. Choose a few people to debate in front of class. Have students decide who is more convincing.

Other Books About Personal Journeys
The Little Prince
by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
The narrator, a downed pilot in the Sahara Desert, while trying to repair his wrecked plane sees an apparition of a little prince, who tells of his journey to other planets and what he has learned.

Walk Two Moons
by Sharon Creech
A young girl on a trip with her grandparents has her own personal revelations.

Other Books by Paulo Coelho
By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept
The Valkyries: An Encounter With Angels
The Pilgrimage: A Contemporary Quest for Ancient Wisdom
The Fifth Mountain

Teaching plan written by Gabrielle Nidus