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Cross-Curricular Teaching and Children's Literature: Dixie and Burt Hear a "Quack!"

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Dixie and Burt Hear a “QUACK!”

By Brittany Skiba
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Honors Project

Bowling Green State University
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Dixie and Burt Hear a “Quack!” is offered here, followed by lesson plans that can accompany this story. All are focused on cross-curricular teaching and learning for a first- or second-grade classroom.
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Dedicated to my family, friends, and two loving dogs: Dixie and Burt
The day began just like every other Sunday, in the country home of Dixie and Burt. Sunday is the day that their human parents love to bathe them, even when they do not want a bath.

Of the two dogs, Dixie is the one who dislikes the bath most, but she knows that being bathed makes her parents happy, so she always tries to act as happy as possible.
When their bath is finished, it is time to dry off, which Burt thinks is a game. While Dixie gets dried off with the towel, Burt begins to bite the towel as his father tries to dry his face.

Burt loves trying to bite the towel and play Tug O’ War, but, eventually, both of the dogs give in and get dried off.
Now that they are both dry and clean, Dixie lies down in her bed, but Burt goes and sits by the door, because they both know what is coming next.

Every time, after they have been bathed, their parents leave the house for quite some time. The dogs always wonder where their parents go. It is strange because, when their parents come home, they are always carrying big bags of food. Dixie and Burt think this is magical.

Although the dogs love that their parents bring back food, they hate that their parents leave. Burt misses his parents the most.

While Dixie lies in silence and his parents continue to get ready to leave, Burt sits by the door and whines.
“Goodbye, Burt and Dixie, we love you. Be good!” Mom and Dad shout as they walk out the door.

After hearing these words, Burt runs to the window to see his mom and dad drive off down the driveway. Burt continues to watch from the window, until the car is out of sight.

However, what Burt and Dixie do not realize is that, unlike every other Sunday, this Sunday is different. The front door of the house is not closed all the way.
Like usual, when being left alone, Burt’s sadness turns into excitement. He starts to run up to Dixie.

“Dixie our parents are gone. We can talk now! Let’s play!” says Burt.

“No thanks,” says Dixie, but Burt thinks he can convince Dixie to play.

“Rope?” yips Burt at Dixie, but Dixie just ignores Burt and continues to lie on her bed.

Burt says, “Okay, not rope.... Oh I know! Ball?”

Silence is still Dixie’s answer. She just lifts her head and lays it back down.

However, Burt refuses to stop. He still wants to play.

“Dixie, come on, let’s play! I am bored! We can run around!”
At this point, Dixie cannot take it anymore. She lifts her head and barks.

“Burt, no! That is not safe! Mom and Dad will be upset, and I am comfortable in my bed. Go lie down!”
Burt begins to walk away, but soon forgets Dixie’s warning. He starts to run in circles around the coffee table.

Dixie looks up to see Burt running around the table, going faster and faster. Suddenly, Dixie sees that the vase of flowers on the table is wobbling.

Dixie is afraid that the flowers are going to fall. If that happens, both her and Burt will be punished for being careless around Mom’s and Dad’s valuable belongings.

“Burt! No! Stop! You are about to break something!” shouts Dixie.

Burt stops in his tracks. Silence fills the room.

All of the sudden, the next thing Dixie and Burt hear is the faint sound of a ...

Quack
“What was that?” yelps Burt.

“I am not sure,” says Dixie, “but do not worry about it. The sound came from outside. We’re fine in here.”

Burt’s ears perk up when he hears the word “outside” come from Dixie’s mouth, and he runs to the door.

When he looks outside, Burt’s tail begins to wag with excitement. He turns and runs to Dixie.

“Dixie! Dixie! Come look outside! There is a little, yellow, fluffy animal on the front yard!” shouts Burt, but, of course, Dixie does not seem to care.
Burt looks at Dixie. Burt runs back to the door to have another look. Burt is not able to stop himself …

**Crash!**

Burt slams right into the front door. It swings open.

Burt turns and yells to Dixie. “Come on. I got the door open! Let’s go see this little, yellow, fluffy thing!”

Burt runs out the door and Dixie instantly worries what Mom and Dad will think if Burt is not in the house when they come back home.

Dixie gets off of her bed and runs after Burt.
When Dixie gets outside, she sees Burt standing behind a bush and looking at the little, yellow, fluffy animal.

Burt turns to Dixie and asks, “What is it? It looks lost.”

Confused, Dixie says, “I really do not know.” With hesitation, Dixie tells Burt, “I’m sure it will find its family on its own. Let’s go back inside now, Burt.”

But, yet again, Burt is doing the opposite of what Dixie asks.

Burt begins running towards the little, yellow, fluffy animal, shouting, “Don’t worry, Dixie! I will smell the animal to find out what it is. Then, we can bring it back to its family.”
As Burt runs towards the little, yellow, fluffy animal, its eyes get big. Its little, yellow, fluffy wings start to flap, as if it is going to fly away, but it does not even lift off the ground.

Instead, the little, yellow, fluffy animal begins to run away.

“Dixie, hurry! It’s getting away!” shouts Burt as he begins to follow the animal. “Let’s follow it. Maybe we will find its family!”
As Dixie sees Burt and the little, yellow, fluffy animal begin to go out of sight, she worries and shouts, “Burt, no! That's not safe!”

Burt does not hear Dixie.

Dixie looks at the house. She knows she should stay, but she looks back at Burt who is running away and following the little, yellow, fluffy animal.

Dixie thinks to herself, ‘If I am the only one home when Mom and Dad come back, then I will get in trouble. I have to go get Burt, even if I do not want to.’

Reluctantly, Dixie begins to chase after Burt and the little, yellow, fluffy animal.
Dixie catches up to Burt and they both follow the little, yellow, fluffy animal until they reach a pond that is in the backyard of their home. At the pond, the little, yellow, fluffy animal starts to quack with excitement, repeatedly.

Dixie turns to Burt and says, “This must be its home. It seems pretty excited.”

Burt takes a look at the pond and sees all the different animals living there. She feels discouraged. “How are we going to know which one is this little, yellow, fluffy animal’s family?” Burt asks Dixie.

“I am not sure yet, Burt, but first, we need to get her to come with us, and then we can go try and talk to the other animals.”
Dixie and Burt slowly move towards the little, yellow, fluffy animal, trying to show how nice and friendly they are. The little, yellow, fluffy animal does not noticed them because it is looking at the pond, so Dixie says, “Excuse me.” She receives no answer.

“Excuse me, little, yellow, fluffy thing. We would like to help you find your family and to ...” and before Dixie finishes her sentence, the little, yellow, fluffy animal says, “Family?” and begins to jump up and down.

Burt is so happy the little, yellow, fluffy animal spoke. He begins to ask her every question he can think of, but every answer the little, yellow, fluffy animal gives is “Family.”

Burt realizes that she must be too little to talk. Burt says, “Stand on my head. We will find your family.” Then, Burt said to Dixie, “We will call her Fluffy.”
On their search, the first animal they come across is on the bank of the pond, resting on a log. It has a large shell, four legs, and a small, green head.

When Dixie and Burt walk up to the shelled, four-legged, green animal, it walks very slowly. When the shelled, four-legged, green animal sees Fluffy and the two dogs, the shelled, four-legged, green animal freezes.

In a terrified voice, the shelled, four-legged, green animal says, “Don’t hurt me.”

“Oh good! You can talk. Oh please, can you help us? Is this your child? I think she is lost,” Dixie says.
The shelled, four-legged, green animal takes one look at Fluffy and sadly shakes his head. The shelled, four-legged, green animal says, “I am sorry. She is not one of mine. I would gladly take her to live with me, but I do not think she would be happy living underwater, like me and my family.”

The shelled, four-legged, green animal dives into the water and swims towards his family. He yells back, “Her family may be farther down the pond, but, if not, bring her back to us and we will raise her as best we can.”

Dixie and Burt shout back, “Thank you!” and then continue to travel down the bank of the pond.
While continuing down the bank, Burt yells, “Look! Look!” and points his nose towards an orange, scaley animal that is swimming around in the water.

Dixie yells at the tiny animal, “Hello! Does this little, yellow, fluffy animal belong in your family? She is lost. We want to find her family!”
The orange, scaley animal swims up to the surface of the water and says, “Can she swim? Have her come in closer so that I can see!”

Burt lowers his head and directs Fluffy to the water. She swims up to the orange, scaley animal, but Fluffy is only able to swim on top of the water. The orange, scaley animal is swimming under the water. Fluffy tries to go under, but she pops right back up. After a few attempts, the little, yellow, fluffy animal leaves the pond and comes back to the bank to be with Dixie and Burt.

“I am sorry she cannot live with us. I don’t think she will be happy until she finds her perfect family, but bring her back if you cannot find her family. We will find a way to take care of her, even if we are different!” the orange, scaley animal says as she swims away.
Dixie and Burt refuse to lose hope as they continue down the bank of the pond. Fluffy waddles beside them.

They are almost to the other side of the pond when they are surprised by a sound behind them ...

Ribbit

This sends Dixie, Burt, and the little, yellow, fluffy animal plunging into the pond in fear.
Slowly, Dixie and Burt walk out of the pond, dripping with water and mud. Dixie looks at herself and sees she is no longer clean from her bath. She thinks, ‘We will definitely be in trouble now.’

Dixie turns to see what made the sound. She sees a fat, slimy, green animal hopping in the grass.
“Sorry for scaring you! I heard you found someone looking for a family,” states the fat, slimy, green animal.

Fluffy approaches the fat, slimy, green animal and tries to hop up and down, just like him, but she very quickly becomes tired.

“I am so sorry, my friends. I think there may be a better family out there for her because I am always hopping around, but if you cannot find one, bring her back to me!” the fat, slimy, green animal bellows as he leaps off.
Dixie, Burt, and Fluffy continued on. As they reach the end of the pond, Dixie begins to give up on finding Fluffy’s family.

She turns to Burt and says, “Alright Burt, there is nothing more we can do. Mom and Dad will be home soon. Her family is probably nearby. We can just leave her here, and I am sure her parents will find her.”

Once again, Burt is not paying attention to Dixie’s warnings. He was playing with Fluffy. Dixie sighs and begins to turn for home, leaving Burt and Fluffy behind.

Just then, she hears a familiar, but louder “Quack” come from the tall grass.
Dixie yells back to Burt, “Be quiet!” and she walks closer to the tall grass.

When she peeks in, she sees multiple, little, fluffy animals swimming in the water. Fluffy becomes so happy that she jumps into the water with the others, cheering, “Family!”

When they see how happy Fluffy is, Dixie and Burt know this is where she belongs. While watching, a “Quack” comes from the sky, and a much larger version of their friend flies down, landing in the water in front of the others.

“That must be her mother,” says Burt.
“I think you are right Burt,” says Dixie, “Let’s go say hello.”

Just then, Dixie hears a familiar sound come from the road. It sounds like their Mom’s and Dad’s car horn.

Dixie turns and looks, only to see their Mom’s and Dad’s car driving down the street.

“Oh no! Mom and Dad! We have to go, Burt!” she shouts. Dixie and Burt both begin to run back home.
Mom and Dad are not home yet. Dixie and Burt have a few minutes to spare. Dixie and Burt run as fast as they can. They quickly run through the front door and sit on the floor.

Dixie turns to Burt and says, “Today was a long and scary day, Burt, but I was happy seeing Fluffy return home. Even though I am afraid our parents will find out what we did, I had a lot of fun going on an adventure with you.”

Burt smiles and says, “I had fun with you too, Dixie. We do not always agree, but I am glad to have you in my family.”

After a few minutes pass, Burt’s and Dixie’s Mom and Dad walk through the front door.

Just a few seconds later, her arms full with bags of food, their Mom shouts, “What happened?” and this is when Dixie and Burt realize that they are still wet from the pond. They are covered in mud.
So, just as the day began, Dixie and Burt are back in the bathtub.

As their Mom and Dad are looking out a window and washing them off, Dixie and Burt hear their mother say, “Aw, look at that mother duck with her babies.”

Dixie and Burt look out the window and then look back at one another. They smile as they finally learn what type of animal the little, yellow, fluffy animal is: a duck.

Their father says, “Yes, I see them. There sure are a lot of little families out at our pond. They are all living together, and they are all a little different, but so is our family. Burt and Dixie, you two sure make our family complete.”
Lesson Plans to Accompany *Dixie and Burt Hear a “Quack!”*

These lessons correspond with reading this book in a first- or second-grade classroom.

**Appendix A:** Questions to Ask During Read-Aloud  
**Appendix B:** Science Lesson Plan  
**Appendix C:** Language Lesson Plan  
**Appendix D:** Math Lesson Plan  
**Appendix E:** Resources for Lessons and Extras
Appendix A: Questions to Ask During Read-Aloud

Before Reading:

• What do you think this story might be about based on the cover?
• Why do you think the title says “Quack” and not the word “Duck”?

While Reading:

• Page 1: Why might Dixie dislike baths?
• Page 3: Dixie’s and Burt’s parents left for quite some time and came home with bags of food. Where do you think they went?
• Page 4: What do you think might happen since the door was left open?
• Page 9: What do you think made the “quack” sound?
• Page 11: Why do you think the dogs do not know it is a duck?
• Page 14: Where do you think the duck is going to run to?
• Page 17: What animals do you think they are going to meet?
• Page 18, 20, and 24: What animal do you think is being described?
• Page 25: What do you think the dogs will find in the weeds?
• Page 27: Do you think the dogs will beat their parents home?
• Page 29: Do you think Burt and Dixie will get in trouble?

After Reading:

• What were some of the animals the dogs saw at a pond?
• Do you think the duck could have been happy with any of the other animal families?
• What do you think their parents thought happened to them since they were so muddy?
Appendix B: Science Lesson Plan

Objective
By the end of this lesson, the learner will complete a research report on one pond animal, of their choice, with 90% accuracy.

Materials
Animal Research Report paper (See Appendix E #1), Computer/Ipad, and Pencils

Standards
• SIA.2 Plan and conduct simple investigations
• SIA.5 Communicate about observations, investigations, and explanations
• LS.K2.3a Describe food sources for a variety of animals
• LS.K2.4a List environmental resources needed to help living things survive

Introduction
To introduce the lesson, review the story and the animals that the dogs met at the pond. After reviewing the animals, tell the students that there are still many other animals who live at a pond and, today, you will be exploring some of those animals.
Focus
The students can work individually or in partners, up to groups of three, to research one animal that lives in a pond. The students will fill out an Animal Research Report on their chosen animal.

Closure
The students will then partner up with another group who researched a different animal and share their findings. The teacher will ask the students to share, with the whole class, the information collected about their pond animal.

Differentiation
• Higher Skilled
  ~Encourage them to try and research two animals
  ~Find their research books on their own and read the information alone
  ~Provide the students with a rarer animal that they do not have a lot of prior knowledge on
• Lower Skilled
  ~Partner with higher skilled peer
  ~Provide proximal monitoring and assistance from teacher

Assessment
Collect the Animal Research Report form and check for completion and accuracy.
Appendix C: Language Lesson Plan

Objective
By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to identify the function and use of speech bubbles and thought bubbles two out of three times, in order to understand these forms of graphic conventions.

Materials
Duck and Dog Conversation Sheets (See Appendix E #4), Pencils, and Xerox pages 12, 23, and 31

Standards
• RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson
• RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events
• SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups

Introduction
To introduce the lesson, review the concept of speech bubbles. Review how speech bubbles contain only the exact words that a character says, and how the point of the bubble indicates the person speaking. The teacher can introduce a speech bubble by holding one above his/her head and saying something. Then, the teacher will demonstrate and illustrate the point of a speech bubble by writing what he/she said inside of it. Next, refer back to the story on pages 9 and 25. Ask the students who is speaking on the page. Next, review thought bubbles that look like clouds and include information that the person or animal is thinking, but does not directly say. Then, the teacher can use a thinking face and hold up a thought bubble, with a picture inside, and ask the students what they believe he/she is thinking about. Next, refer back to the story on page 3, where the dogs think about a bag of groceries that their parents will bring home.
Focus
Refer back to the story and how the duckling never had a voice to tell the dogs what she was thinking, since she was so young. Tell the students that today, they are going to give the duckling a voice using speech bubbles or thought bubbles. The students will complete three pages from the book, which are illustrations taken from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. The students can then cut out the pre-made speech bubbles or thought bubbles and write what they think the duckling would be saying or thinking during each instance. They can then glue it on the illustration.

Closure
At the end, the students can share, in a small group of five, what they had the duckling say or think in those instances. The students will receive a large thought bubble cut-out. They will write what they thought about the story, Dixie and Burt Hear a “Quack!” and then attach it to their paper.

Differentiation
• Higher-Skilled
  ~Have the students complete thought bubbles or speech bubbles for both the duckling and dogs in a conversation
• Lower-Skilled
  ~Have a list of options that the student can choose from for the duckling to say or think
  ~Have pre-made speech bubbles and thought bubbles for the three different characters, help the student read them and match them to the correct character according to what is stated

Assessment
The students will turn in their papers, and the teacher can review if they chose the correct type of graphic convention for what they were having the character think or say.
Appendix D: Math Lesson Plan

Objective
By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to make a bar graph to represent data and interpret the data with 85% accuracy.

Materials
Bar Graph Template and Student Response Sheet (See Appendix E #3), Crayons, Pencils, and Pond Life Picture (See Appendix E #2)

Standards
1.MD.C.4 Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another

Introduction
Begin by reviewing a bar graph and discussing each of its components. Next, go over the steps necessary to create a bar graph. Then, review what types of pond animals they read about. Next, pull up a picture on the SmartBoard, if applicable, that shows other animals, not mentioned in the story, that live at a pond. Review these animals.

Focus
After reviewing a bar graph and pond animals, tell the students that they are going to be learning about each other’s favorite pond animal. The students will be given a sheet with the different pond life animals on them. The students will go around the room and ask at least fifteen students what their favorite animal is. Placing a tally mark next to the animal name, the student will collect data on fifteen classmates favorite animals.
Closure
After receiving their responses, the students will go back to their seats and count to make sure they have their fifteen responses. They will then chart the responses on the bar graph using crayons or pencils to shade in the correct number of boxes, aligning to the number of students that voted for each animal. Below the graph will be a series of questions that the students have to answer based off of their results. For example, there will be “How many more... than...?”，“What animal got the most/least votes?” and “How many votes did...and...get together?”

Differentiation
• Higher Skilled
  ~Have the different axes of the graph blank so the student has to fill it out
• Lower Skilled
  ~Partner up with another student
  ~Help students who need support write the labels on the graph
  ~Instruct them to shade in the bars, showing them how the numbers on the left correspond with how many people like a certain animal
  ~Offer the students pre-cut rectangles to place on the bar graph instead of coloring

Assessment
• Circulate and observe the students as they are collecting data and completing their graph.
• Collect the graph to see if the students were able to correctly plot their data and answer questions based on the data collected.
Appendix E: Resources for Lessons and Extras

Materials for Lessons:


3. Graphing Favorite Pond Animal: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yRjM_1ZCiPv16lVSkqOjhr8YX JiHBC33nO4FasrhrZs/edit?usp=sharing

4. Speech Bubbles and Thought Bubbles: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IhBBAisdtiOwN4bfgSS5TrhEbGXPCGNAepMcg9tUgY/edit?usp=sharing
**Extras:**
   Worksheet that reinforces direction words with a pond activity.

   Students cut out and place pond animals in their appropriate setting in the pond.

   Abundance of materials to provide a pond print-rich environment in addition to other fun activities for the classroom.