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NMH SUMMER SESSION

**2010**  
**Middle School Program**  
**SKILLS IN LITERATURE**

The main goal of this course was to have the students engage in a large amount of reading and to enjoy their reading experience. This was accomplished through daily large-group and small-group discussions focused on the assigned readings. The students were expected to actively read portions of the assigned books daily and interact and respond to the texts in a variety of forms such as written discussion questions, plot graphs, character trees, and word maps.

The class discussed strategies that good readers use, such as questioning, connecting, predicting, inferring, visualizing, and synthesizing. These specific strategies were taught with the use of the texts and through modeling and other activities. The students were assisted in their progression with these strategies. For example, they focused on how to discover a theme within the piece of literature and work with the text to understand the importance of the theme, as well as the inference of such a theme.

The students were assigned two lengthy books this summer. They read a novel and a play. Each work provided them with different ways in which to interact with the text while always paying particular attention to character, theme, setting, plot, and point of view. They were assessed for each book based on their participation in discussions, discussion questions done for homework, and major assessments at the end of each book. They wrote two formal analytical essays that focused on using quotes as evidence for an argument. Lastly, literary study was complemented by the study of vocabulary in context. The students were expected to spend at least 60 minutes on homework each evening. The class ended with a small poetry unit in which they both read and created poems. They explored the different possibilities of use of language and the potential power of words. Each student was expected to memorize and present a poem of his or her choice to the class at the conclusion of the session.

TEXTS: *The Chosen*, Chaim Potok  
*A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry  
Selected short stories  
Selected poems

The course met for 75 minutes per day, six days per week, for the five-week session.

Master Teacher: Kelsey Sullivan  
Holderness School

Teaching Intern: Mickey Lenzi  
Connecticut College