

Big Little Dog - A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

It was a beautiful winter's day when the Grade 3 teacher at Vernon Christian School decided to read 'Big Little Dog' by Margriet Ruurs. Having never read the story before, he began oral reading to his class with no knowledge of lay before him on the book's pages.

The class was drawn into the story at once and were captivated throughout its reading with each turn of events. It was a story that the students identified with from the outset and their smiles and cheers signified their feelings for the boy and the dog as each situation unfolded.

Rarely does a book motivate an audience to participate as this one did. Or does a book touch the heart strings of the teacher reading it, as this one did. The teacher had once had a German Sheppard dog that meant a great deal to him. For only about the fourth time in his career, he choked back the tears in front of a classroom full of students. This was okay for him and it enabled the students to see a different side of their teacher.

When the author of this touching story came to visit our school, timetables needed to be shuffled different groups of students to participate and to use the school's gymnasium for readings. Thus, Grade 3 had to give up their gym period. The teacher saw an opportunity in this. He decided that they would spend their gym period outside having a One Dog Pull, using Grade 3 students as the dog and the weight on the sled.

After rounding up four GT Snow Racers, collecting four stop watches, organizing appropriate ropes that could pull the sleds, weighing all of the students, grouping them according to weight and going over rules and procedures, the first One Student Pull was on!

The kids were pumped and had an excellent time striving to be able to pull the most amount of weight in the shortest amount of time. It took two gym classes to eventually arrive at a champion. She pulled 107 kg over a distance of 10 meters in 5.4 seconds.

Many thanks to Mrs. Ruurs for her touching and moving story and her visit to our school. Not to mention the great time that was had by all, when her story was integrated into a gym class and a fun day for the entire school.