Dream Analysis Activity

Purpose:
This activity helps the students think critically about dreams and flashbacks, which are important in Charlie’s character development in the novel. By analyzing their own dreams the students become more aware of the significance of different aspects of dreams and will be better able to interpret the significance of Charlie’s dreams and flashbacks.

Context:
This activity can be used any time in the first month of the book. It should be used before most of Charlie’s dreams, psychic episodes and flashbacks so that they are prepared to interpret those episodes when they occur.

Directions:
2 weeks before:
• Have a short lesson on dreams. Explain that the validity of some of dream interpretation websites is questionable, but it generally recognized in psychology that dreams do have some significance.
• Assign the students to keep a dream journal. Tell them to keep it right next to their bed and write anything they remember first thing in the morning. Tell them you will only be checking this for completion, so they can write anything without having to feel self-conscious.
• Remind the students about their assignment daily.

Day of assignment:
• Read the instructions for the assignment to them. Give them about 15 minutes to fill out the t-chart with elements of one of the dreams from their dream journal.
• Review the instructions for the write-up and give them another 15 minutes to finish the dream analysis.
• Ask for volunteers to share the analysis of their dream.

Segue:
Ask them what they learned about dreams from the activity. Are dreams significant? What kinds of things were meaningful? Did the dreams reflect the way they were feeling or what was going on in their lives? Explain that dreams and flashbacks are going to play a large role in understanding Flowers for Algernon and that they will need to analyze his dreams the same way they analyzed their own dreams in order to learn about Charlie’s character and his past experiences.
Assessment:
Assess students based on the thought shown in their dream analysis. There really aren’t right or wrong answers as long as there is evidence they thought critically about their dreams.
Flowers for Algernon

Dream Analysis

Instructions:
Choose one of the dreams from your dream journal. List the different elements of the dream in the right column. Try to list things like who was in your dream, what happened, where it took place and how you felt. In the left column try to identify the significance of these elements. For example, missing a train could mean you feel like your life is out-of-control and you can’t keep up.

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<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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On a separate sheet of paper write a brief analysis of your dream. Include a brief summary of the dream, but focus your response on what the dream shows about your personality, current mental or emotional state, your past experience, or your concerns about the future.