Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA)
The Secret Life of Bees During Reading Activity

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to help students make predictions about the text, develop connections between bees’ and Lily’s life, and identify the foreshadowing that happens in the book. Using this stop-and-go strategy will hopefully help students create meaning and understand the highly developed analogy created by the author.

Directions:

Step One – Predicting: Have the students make hypothesis of what will happen in the text. Begin with examining the cover of the book. Talk about the title and refer to the pre-reading activity about the concept of metaphors. Help the students make predictions about the book with questions such as:
- What do you think the book will be about?
- Why do you think so?

Next read the first section of Chapter One including the chapter heading. Read until “Right now it’s enough to say that despite everything that happened that summer, I remain tender toward the bees” (2).
- What do you think will happen to the narrator that causes her to reflect on the bees?
- What potential metaphors do you predict that the author will use throughout the text?
- What does the chapter heading imply about the text and why would the author use a heading like this?

Step Two – Reading: Have the students read silently to the end of the stop on page 19. Discuss the story as a class. Refer back to the predictions that the students made and ask which of their predictions were correct. Encourage participation and discussion.

Step Three – Proving: When students find that some of their predictions have been verified, ask them, “Can you prove it?” Have them provide support for their predictions by what they read in the text.

Continue with the DR-TA activity. Have the students read to the stop on page 27. Again ask them for their predictions and what further developments they can see potentially add to the climbing action of the text. Next, have the students read to the end of the chapter and continue discussion about first perceptions of the text. Talk about aspects of tension that have influenced Lily’s life and her relationship with her father, Rosaleen, and her absent mother. Remind the students that Lily is looking back to the past as she narrates so they should be aware of clues she drops about what will happen in the future. Refer back
to the pre-reading activity and talk about how the chapter heading relates to the chapter now that the student’s have read it in it’s entirety.