

## Teacher's Guide for Breathing Underwater

This page includes Multiple Intelligence Projects, comprehension questions, and a prediction guide for *Breathing Underwater* written by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, visit her website: [www.tracievaughnzimmer.com](http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com).

### Comprehension Guide/ Quiz questions:

#### Knowledge:

1. Identify the major characters in *Breathing Underwater*. What role do they each play in the plot?
2. Locate at least three details in the first chapters that reveal the setting of the book and the lifestyle of the characters.

#### Comprehension:

1. In your own words, write a brief summary of what happened between Nick and Caitlyn.
2. List five key events in the plot of *Breathing Underwater*.

#### Application:

1. What scenes illustrate Nick's denial of what he actually did to Caitlyn? How does that add to the suspense in the book?
2. Find three local resources for someone who is in Caitlyn's situation. Be sure to list phone numbers and addresses, and the types of services they offer.

#### Analysis:

1. What types of controlling behavior does Mario discuss in his family violence class? Do you agree with his assessment?
2. Compare and contrast Tom and Nick. How are their lives similar, how different?

#### Synthesis:

1. How would you handle the events in this book if you were Caitlyn? Tom?
2. Do you think Nick is less guilty because of his father's abuse? Or, is that only an excuse for bad behavior? Use examples to prove your thesis.

#### Evaluation:

1. Will Tom and Nick be able to become close friends again?
2. Will Caitlyn ever get involved in an abusive relationship again? Why or why not.
3. Which scene do you think was most vivid? Why?

## Multiple Intelligence Projects

Multiple Intelligence theory is based of the work of Howard Gardner at Harvard. The thrust of his research shows that people have a variety of intelligences, not just the two that schools focus on

(math/language) and that many students can reach higher degrees of success when they are allowed to use the one where they excel.

### **Verbal:**

Write a prediction guide for a new reader of *Breathing Underwater*. Ask questions which will later be answered by events in the book. For example, after the January 17 chapter, an appropriate question would be.... Will Nick stick to his punishment or will he violate the terms of his parole?

### **Logical/ Mathematical:**

Write a brief timeline of the major events in the story. Be sure to file scenes in their proper location, since the narrative is written outside chronological order. Scenes that are written as flashback should be identified in a different color. Circle what you believe to be the major turning point in the story.

### **Visual/ Spatial:**

Gather old newspapers and cut out any articles, headlines or pictures that deal with the themes of violence and abuse. Create a collage type effect, and then write a short public service announcement for the top of the poster. Use color to highlight important points.

### **Body/Kinesthetic:**

Act out the scene where Nick accuses Caitlin of flirting with Derek. Don't write a script just do it as you remember it.

### **Music:**

Find lyrics that you think Nick would enjoy. In a short journal explain why.

### **Intrapersonal:**

Reread the section that begins on page 239. Then, imagine the scenes as if they are a movie playing inside your head. Decide:

If you were casting director, which friends would you choose to play each part? Why?

Where would you film the scenes in your community?

What parts would warrant a close up? For what effect?

Would you use black and white film, or color or a combination. Defend your choice.

If you have access to a video camera, go film the locations, and perhaps have a casting call with your friends.

### **Interpersonal**

Group Project:

Novel jury. With no more than five students, the group must come to some kind of consensus on the following issues from the novel.

1. Could Caitlin's mother have prevented the abuse?
2. Who is more responsible for what happened: Nick or his father?
3. Will Nick be different in his next relationship?
4. Should Tom have been able to stop Nick?
5. Did the sexual relationship between Caitlin and Nick contribute to her abuse?
6. Are there any times where hitting a boyfriend/girlfriend are justified? If so, when?

## Prediction Guide:

Examine closely the cover art. List a possible number of topics that the book could be about. What do you think the author means by the title?

Read just the first page. What do you know already about the main character and his father?

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