

Banner and the Butterfly: The Experience of Illustrating a Children's Book

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Abstract

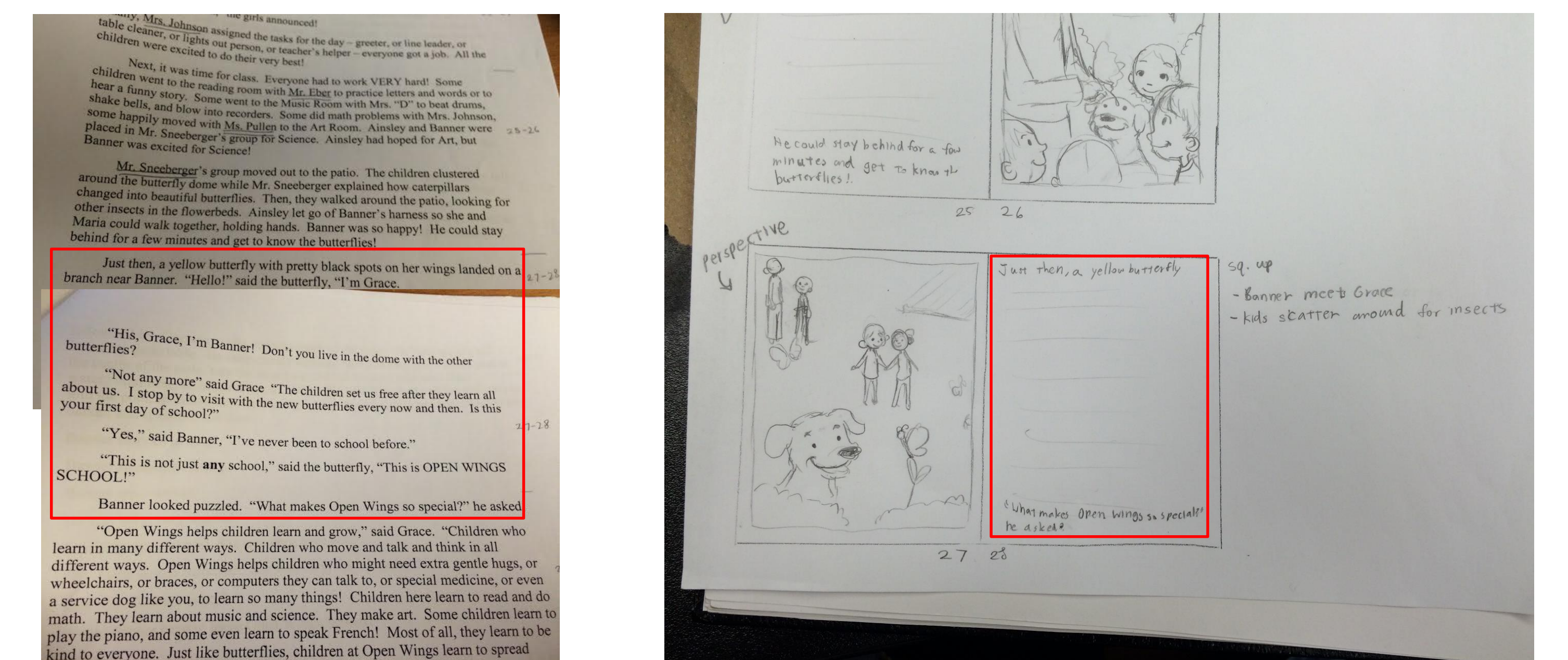
Director of Writing Center, Jean Preston offered studio art majors the opportunity to illustrate her children's book, *Banner and the Butterfly*. I was fortunate to be chosen to work with her to publish this book. The story was inspired by a real service dog and real students at a real school that welcomes complex and special needs children into a diverse community of learners. The story features Banner the Service Dog and his charge, Ainsley, as they experience the first day of school at Open Wings. Here they meet their new classmates, teachers, and a yellow butterfly named Grace. Ainsley and Banner have many new adventures at Open Wings School.

The research process and the preparation for the illustrations took place during J-term as an independent study (Advanced Children's Book Illustration), taught by Professor Diane Levesque. I began by reading the story, then I researched the characters and setting. I visited Open Wings School, and spent a day sketching the students so that I could incorporate their expressions, movements, and emotions in the illustrations. I then chose a color palette to match the theme of the story. I conferred with the author for suggestions before I began working on the actual illustrations. After her approval, I drew the final pictures with watercolor pencil and gouache. I then scanned each illustration and used Photoshop for the final touches.

Concept Art



Process

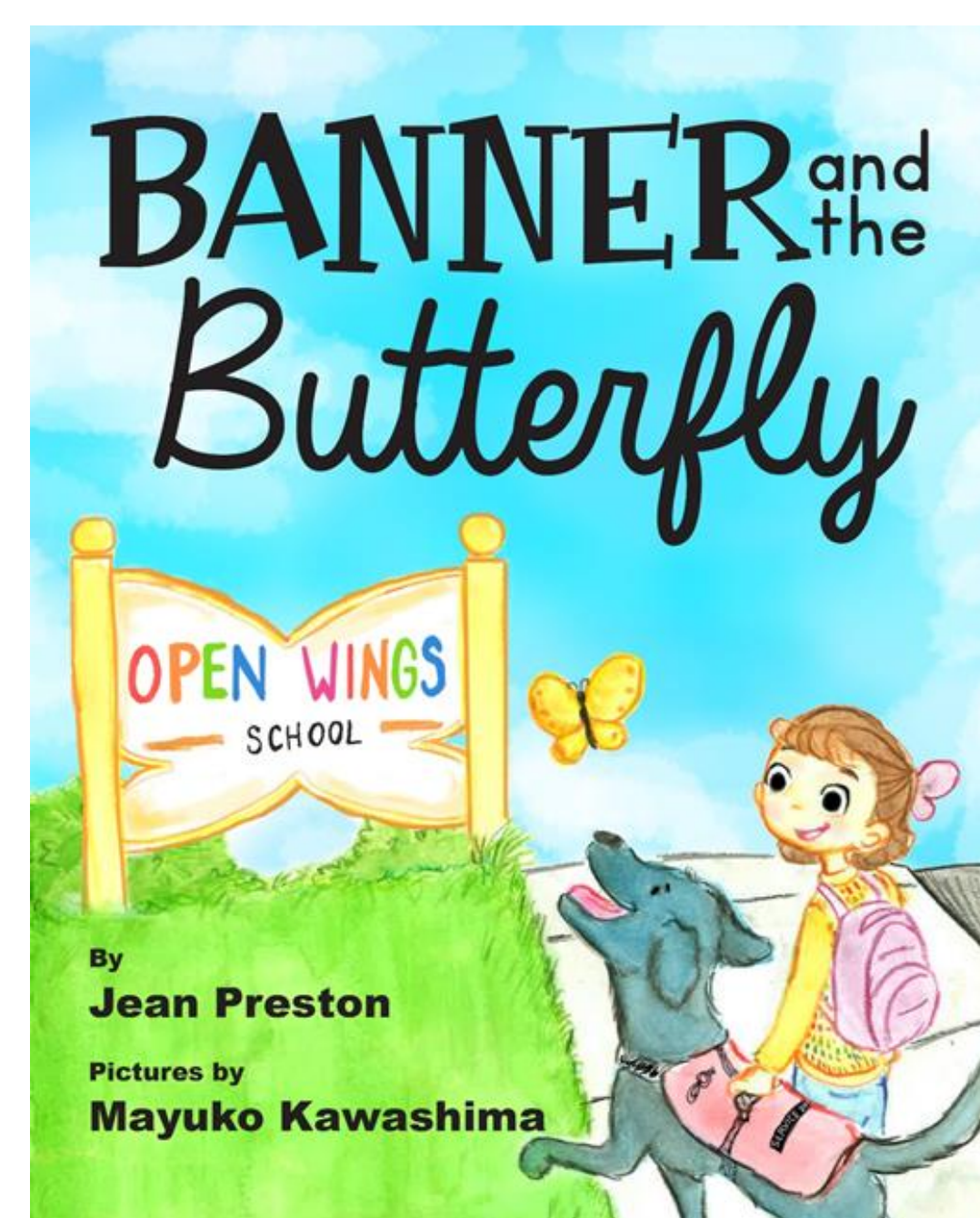


Sketches & Storyboards



Conclusion

Key to publishing a children's book are both research and communication. Researching gave me the ideas I needed to fit the theme and helped me to understand the main concept of the story. I visited Open Wings School in Kenosha and met with teachers and students including, Ainsley and even Banner. Their energy and joy were great inspirations to me. Communication was also vital. I was in constant communication with Jean Preston and Professor Levesque for approval and suggestions. Illustrating for this book was a great opportunity for me, and I am planning to utilize my passion by continuing to illustrate children's books in my career.



Acknowledgements

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