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Fourth Grade Curriculum To Increase Literacy Achievement In ELL Students

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FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM TO INCREASE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT IN

ELL STUDENTS

By

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To my friends and family for all your unwavering help and support with this. Thank you

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invaluable.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

"Today and everyday…"

Justin Bieber blares from the speakers, "Is it too late now to say sorry….". Students walk quickly to get their book bags, place them in their reading spot and come back to the carpet. 52 seconds. Perfect. It is mid January and Reader's Workshop is running like clockwork. I play the Reader's Workshop song, students get ready, and are back on the carpet for the mini-lesson in under one minute. Today, just like everyday, we start the mini-lesson off with a short connection. This one is a funny song about contractions. The students love it. They laugh excitedly as a wrecking ball shows up on the screen, knocking out letters and replacing them with an apostrophe, turning the two words into a contraction. "Again! Again!" They shout, eager to watch the contraction maker again. I tell them we can watch it again during snack and then quickly dive into the mini-lesson.

After the mini-lesson I watch them happily walk off to their reading spots. I think to myself how they seemed to have really understood that lesson, and I wish all lessons could go like this. This leads me to wonder what else I could be doing during literacy time to help increase their achievement…

Introduction

The previous vignette was a small snapshot of a typical day at school for me, and one of the major factors when creating my research question. Having taught using

Reader's and Writer's Workshop for the past four years, I felt like it was time to learn more about literacy instruction. This led me to the question: How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English Language Learners by incorporating balanced literacy techniques?The Units of Study is a workshop curriculum created by Lucy Calkins. Throughout this capstone I will do my best to answer this question. In this first chapter I will discuss a bit of my own teaching background, the background of the school where I am currently teaching, reasons for choosing this topic and also the significance of the final project.

My Background

I am currently in my fourth year of teaching and have taught at two different schools. My first two years I taught at a school in the Midwest with a large percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch, where around 80% of my class were learning English as a second language. While teaching in Minneapolis, I taught fourth grade as well as Kindergarten.

My first year of teaching can be called less than ideal. I finished student teaching in the fall and received my teaching license near the beginning of November. Just two days later, a long term substitute position became available at a school where I had previously volunteered. Eagerly, I applied for the job and officially became a fourth grade teacher.

During my interview for the job, I remember my principal asking how I would handle working with "difficult" students. Little did I know how difficult they would be. As I walked up to the classroom to see my new class, I remember getting looks from

some of the veteran teachers in the hallway. "You're the new fourth grade teacher? Ha! Good luck!" I remember just nervously smiling, not really knowing what to expect.

The principal opens the door to the classroom and it is unbelievable. There are paper balls everywhere, rubber bands and broken bits of pencils and food all over the floor. It looked to me like someone had ransacked the room. The principal was appalled at the state of the classroom and immediately called for a custodian to come. She then started throwing away everything she could see, notebooks, folders, and pencils. She insisted I would be the "fresh start" and we would get all new things for the classroom.

The students came back to the room just as we finished sweeping up the floor. Thirty- three fourth graders looked at me cautiously, wondering who I was and how long I would stay. In the past month the class had over five different substitutes and they were wary of trusting anyone else.

Most of these students were not readily "buying into" school culture for various reasons and thus were performing below grade level. Many of them were ELL students who simply did not have the vocabulary to pass the higher level texts. They also were not accustomed to reading independently. When practicing reading for stamina the first few weeks of Reader's Workshop they could barely read silently for five minutes. Writer's Workshop did not fare any better, as students were unable to spell even second grade sight words.

One thing I realized when working with these kids was how much they craved and enjoyed the structure of the workshop models. They liked knowing how the lessons would go each day and it became a comfortable routine to them. They knew exactly

where their reading spot was and how to get ready in a minute flat. This is something I still remember from my first year of teaching. My students craved the routine of the workshop model, but then also enjoyed their independent time once they had built enough stamina. This is one of the reasons why I think a workshop model should definitely be a part of a best practice curriculum.

Thankfully, my new school also believes in a workshop model. I currently am in my second year teaching first grade at an international school in Central America. Luckily, both schools I have worked in have very similar curriculums and both have required teachers to teach Readers' and Writers' Workshop. I have also had the opportunity to participate in professional development focused on how to implement workshop and I have a very strong concept of how workshop should look in a classroom. After struggling through my first year, I realized how much of a difference working in a workshop model can make.

This year I decided to put an extra focus on teaching literacy and researching best practices to increase student achievement. I have been working closely with the literacy coach at my school to try out ideas such as shared writing (Burkins & Yaris, 2016). My students have really liked some of the shared writing activities we have done as a class and I am looking forward to learning about other ways to increase their engagement.

Since this year is my second year of teaching first grade I was able to reflect on last year's lessons and remember what was challenging for my students. This enabled me to plan the unit differently and focus on scaffolding the lessons. An example of this is a

shared writing activity I did before starting our fiction writing unit. To help students understand the parts of a story we wrote a story together.

During the fiction writing unit, students used a graphic organizer to plan their stories, so I created a larger one to complete with the whole group. The first shared writing we did was simply planning the story and filling out the organizer. We talked about our planner for the rest of the week and then the following week students were asked to fill out the graphic organizers on their own. Last year I remember having students be very confused about setting, problem and solution, but this year my students got it right away! I know this was due in part to the scaffolding we had done the week before. Shared writing is just one of the parts of balanced literacy I will include in my curriculum project.

Next year I will be switching sections in my school to teach fourth grade in the elementary. Due to this switch I decided for my capstone I wanted to research how to make the Units of Study more accessible to my students learning English as a second language. Having taught fourth grade before, I am somewhat familiar with the curriculum and what to expect of fourth graders, but I am very interested in diving deeper and really making sure I am making the switch as best as I can.

Background of the School

The school I am currently working in is a private international school, meaning that all students graduating receive a diploma equal to those that students attending school in the United States receive. The students that attend my school come from many of the most successful families in their country. Many students arrive in cars driven by

chauffeurs and come to the gates with more than one bodyguard. Almost all of the families have at least one nanny that does anything and everything the students request.

The school is a dual language immersion program, meaning each day students receive some of their instruction in English, and some in Spanish. In first grade, where I am currently teaching, students receive 50% of their instruction in English and the other 50% in Spanish. As students progress in the grades the amount of English to Spanish time changes, with fourth grade being about 65% in English and 35% in Spanish. This leads to an interesting schedule when trying to teach the curriculum.

Throughout the week, students start the day three times per week in English, and two times per week in Spanish. Whichever language starts the day during morning meeting is the language in which students will have readers' and writers' workshop. Spanish and English teachers work together to plan which lessons will be taught in which language. Lessons that are trickier concepts may be taught in both languages to better facilitate student understanding. I work closely with my Spanish partner as well as a bilingual assistant to ensure all the teaching points are being taught.

Collaborating in such a way is easier said than done. Weeks of planning may be thrown off by a last minute event. Occasionally lessons in Spanish have been meant to build off of something taught in English, but when the lesson gets cancelled, it is hard to get reorganized. This continual switching of English to Spanish also makes it hard to do anything that will take longer than forty minutes at a time. The day is split into different forty minute blocks so there is a lot of transitioning between the two languages. On days where I have Readers' and Writers' Workshop, I only have eighty minutes of the day for

literacy instruction. The rest of the blocks are Spanish time, Specials, Math or Science.

Therefore it is crucial we are making the most of literacy time, and really planning

activities that keep students actively engaged.

The reading curriculum we use at my school is the Units of Study by Lucy

Calkins. We are required to teach the lessons in a Reader's Workshop format, following

many of the same steps used during Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 2001). The steps of a

Reader's Workshop lesson are as follows:

1. Connection

2. The Teaching Phase

3. The Active Engagement Phase

4. Link

5. Independent Practice

6. Share (Calkins, 2001)

This is the first year my school has implemented this curriculum. My school requires all

teachers to teach reading in a workshop model, but many teachers feel that the Units

move too fast due to students lack of English background knowledge. Many of the

lessons are also written with the idea that students have been learning using a workshop

model, with the Units of Study lessons since kindergarten. As this is our first year using

the Units of Study, the current fourth graders are missing a lot of background to really get

the most benefit from these units.

The writing curriculum we use at my school is the Lucy Calkins Units of Study

(Calkins, 2001). The Units of Study were developed by the Teacher's College Reading

and Writing Project, and include many best practice ideas. Each lesson is broken into different steps including a connection, mini lesson, and active engagement before students practice the skill independently (Calkins, 2001). My school has given us many professional development opportunities to make sure everyone is implementing the workshop correctly. Writers' Workshop was implemented at my school two years ago, and many teachers who taught prior to workshop agree that while students have made great improvements, there should be more scaffolding with the lessons to really help students achieve.

A Typical Day

On a typical day, I have eighty minutes of literacy time with my students. During this time we will have both Readers' and Writers' Workshop. Each day the lessons start off the same way:

1. Connection

2. Mini-lesson

3. Teaching Point

4. Active Engagement

5. Link

6. Independent Practice

7. Share

Two days per week while students are working on independent practice, I work with guided reading groups.

The third day I confer with specific students or do running records. The format is the same during Writing Workshop, only on the third day instead of running records, I am only conferring.

Why this Topic?

While students are achieving and making many gains academically, our end of year testing has revealed that a greater number of students this year are reading and writing below grade level. Many of my students struggle with writing sight words correctly, or writing words using only English letter sounds instead of mixing English and Spanish. Since we have a limited amount of time per day with our students, it is essential to make sure that the lessons we are teaching are accessible to the students.

I decided to write the curriculum specifically with English language learners in mind for a few reasons. The main reason is because, although my school is almost 100% students whose native language is different from English, we rarely talk about adopting curriculum aimed at increasing academic performance amongst ELL students, specifically.

Another reason I want to focus on English language strategies is because of the current growth in ELL students in schools across the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, ELL students in US public school have been increasing since 2004. In the school year 2014-2015, around 4.6 million students are learning English as their second language (2017). This is something many teachers need to adapt their teaching to address these needs.

Significance of the Project

The goal of this project is to answer the question: How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices? This unit will focus on reading and writing for fourth grade students and activities to increase achievement in literacy.

Fourth grade teachers who have students struggling with writing and reading and feel their students need more scaffolding will benefit from this curriculum. Teachers who teach students learning English as a second language will also benefit from this curriculum. According to an NPR project titled "5 Million Voices" ELL students being followed throughout their academic careers are not receiving the instruction that they need (Sanchez, 2017). This curriculum will help classroom teachers modify their own instruction to help these students that are struggling.

Summary

Now that a bit of the background to the topic has been explored the next chapter will delve deeper into the research behind best practice ideas. The literature review will start by giving the reader a better understanding of the special needs of ELL students. It will discuss parts of the language acquisition process as well as ways to modify instruction to benefit ELL students. The literature review will also cover some of the best practices in literacy in both reading and writing. It will touch on the ideas of shared reading and writing, the Fountas and Pinnell Continuum (2007), and also take a closer look at guided reading.

The background information from this chapter as well as the literature review are both focusing on answering the research question: How can I make the Units of Study

more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy

practices?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

A Common Reality

It is the middle of March. Students and teachers are gearing up to take the state mandated standardized tests. The classroom seems to already be bursting at the seams with 33 growing bodies spread out reading silently to themselves. Then there is a knock on the door. "Ms. Baker, you are going to need to find another desk," the assistant principal says to me, "We have a new student here from Mexico." I quickly put a smile on my face and look over at our new student. "Good morning," I say, "Welcome to our classroom." The student looks at me with a nervous smile on his face. He nods his head but says nothing. It is then that I realize he does not speak any English. I quickly find one of my Spanish speaking students to welcome him into the classroom. Now to work on finding him a desk...

Introduction

Unfortunately for many this is a common scenario across schools in the United States. Students with little to no English skills are entering classrooms, often grades behind in their native language. According to a recent study done by NPR, about 1 out of every 10 students in a US public school today is learning English as a second language (Sanchez, 2017). This chapter discusses best practices in literacy instruction that teachers can use to help these students achieve. It will also review the specific needs of ELL students, helping to give a background of some of the struggles the students may be

facing. When combining the knowledge of these three sections they will also serve to answer the research question How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English Language Learners by incorporating balanced literacy techniques?

This chapter is split into three different sections. The first section discusses the specific stages a student new to learning English will go through. The second section will discuss what students need as they improve their fluency in English. These first two sections will be important when answering the research question by sharing information solely on ELL students. The last section discusses current best practice methods including balanced literacy. This section will be split into multiple subsections in order to delve deeper into certain best practices and will further answer the research question by giving a description of each best practice methodology.

Welcoming a Newcomer

Teaching students who are learning English as a second language is not the same as teaching native English speakers. As Haynes (2007) mentioned in her book *Getting Started with English Language Learners*, English language learners go through a variety of stages before they reach fluency. It is important to keep these stages in mind while teaching, and realize where each student is in the English learning process.

The first stage in this process is known as the newcomer stage. The newcomer stage is characterized by minimal to no English language knowledge. During this stage newcomers will be in the silent or receptive stage of language acquisition. Newcomers may be able to minimally understand, and nod their head yes or no to answer basic

questions (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Newcomers will be listening, learning new vocabulary and practicing pronunciation (Five Stages of Second Language Acquisition, 2016).

Newcomer students at this stage are unable to express themselves at all and would benefit from having someone translate for them. An important thing to remember when working with a newcomer is they are feeling very out of their element. They have come to a new country where they know no one, and where they are unable to express themselves. Newcomer students need to be treated with patience, and given extra resources to help them move through the language learning process (Haynes, 2007). Teachers can help newcomers by using easy to answer prompts such as "Show me… Circle the... " (Hill & Flynn, 2006, p. 15)

Another way to help newcomer students is to use gestures and body movements to help explain new concepts. For new vocabulary, pictures and realia should be included whenever possible (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Research has shown that it often takes around one to three years for a student to develop their basic communication skills. Complete fluency in the language may take anywhere from five to ten years (Haynes, 2007).

According to Haynes there are five separate stages within the newcomer stage itself. The first stage is known as the "Honeymoon Stage." While in this stage newcomers are very positive about their new life and excited to learn more about their new country (Haynes, 2007, p. 3). In the Honeymoon Stage newcomers have not yet been hit with culture shock, a term first used by anthropologist Kalvero Oberg in 1960. Kolberg used the term to describe what people may feel when they are living in an unfamiliar culture

(as cited in Haynes, 2007, p. 2) This feeling of "culture shock" may be what leads the student to the next stage in the process - the Rejection stage.

In the Rejection stage the newcomer wants nothing to do with the new culture. The newcomer may feel as though the differences between the two cultures are vast, and they will have a strong longing to reconnect with their old cultural identity. This stage leads newcomers to act in various ways. Some newcomers may act completely differently than they normally would. Frustrated by being unable to communicate, some newcomers turn aggressive. This aggression may come out in the forms of kicking, screaming, or even crying. Other newcomers in this stage may simply seem depressed. They have no energy to do things and seem very uninterested in learning English at all (Haynes, 2007, p. 3).

Once through the Rejection stage newcomers often move to the Regression stage. In this stage the newcomer still is refusing to accept the new culture. They want to communicate only in their primary language and are often very homesick. They miss their old culture and continue to be overwhelmed by their new surroundings (Haynes, 2007, p. 3). As students are struggling their way through these first stages it is important that the teacher is very patient with them. It is normal for the student to want to reject the culture. It will take them time to accept their new home, and move to the fourth stage of the process known as the "Integration" stage.

In the integration stage the newcomer will start to accept parts of their new culture. They will still notice the differences, but will now make an attempt to blend them with their previous life. The integration stage often alarms many immigrant parents who

worry their child will "lose" their previous identity. Students in the integration stage may still be struggling with their identity, but are starting to come to terms with their new life (Haynes, 2007, p. 4).

Once they have fully accepted their new culture, the newcomer moves to the final stage. The Acceptance stage can be reached once the newcomer has fully transitioned into their new identity. They accept their new culture is different and try to combine their two lives (Haynes, 2007, p. 4). It is once the newcomer moves to the final stage they can begin to start making more gains in the English language. The newcomer is now ready to transfer previous knowledge in their primary language to help them learn their second language.

While newcomers may now be ready to transfer previous knowledge from their primary language to English, many of them are below grade level in their primary language as well. These students would benefit from learning the material in their maternal language first, in order to be able to transfer knowledge. Unfortunately for many teachers and students this is not an option. To remedy this, it is best if newcomer students attend extra classes. They would benefit from weekend classes, as well as extra classes after the regular school day (DelliCarpini et al., 2009).

As newcomers move through the language acquisition process they will become more comfortable in their new language, yet still require differentiated practices to ensure they continue to succeed.

Social English

As newcomers improve their English language skills they quickly get to a place where they are able to communicate socially. They can interact with their peers in English and understand pop culture. While socially they are thriving, they still may be struggling inside of the classroom. Research shows it takes between four and seven years for a student to be able to comprehend academic English (Lee, 2012). Students in this stage of the language process need extra support from teachers.

As students are moving through the stages of English language development it is easy for teachers to overlook the fact these students still need extra support academically. According to Himmele and Himmele (2009), it is when students are exited from ELL programs they have the most trouble. These students are going from explicit language instruction to barely any. Students in this stage of the language learning process still need to be immersed in a language rich environment, and this will only happen if teachers are intentionally planning with ELL students in mind (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). The next section will take a closer look at some things teachers can do to increase achievement not only with their ELL students, but for all students in their classroom.

Strategies to develop English. Academic English is best developed in content rich classrooms (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). ELL students are better able to learn academic words when they are given a context to apply them to, rather than just learning the words by themselves.

One example of a strategy to help ELL students understand a content heavy reading passage is the idea of writing a "Found Poem"(Himmele & Himmele, 2009). A "Found Poem" is where the students read through a passage and write down 50 words

they feel are important to understanding the piece. Students then share their "Found Poem" with others, and often end up with a better understanding of the piece. Another great reason to do a "Found Poem" is because it is a challenging activity presented in a low-risk way. Students are not worried about whether their English is right or wrong, they are focusing more on the content (Himmele & Himmele, 2009).

Another important strategy to use when teaching ELL students is explicit vocabulary instruction (Shatz & Wilkinson, 2010). To learn a new vocabulary word students need to interact with the word in multiple ways. It is also helpful for students to connect the new vocabulary word to the same word in their native language. Teachers can help students make this transfer by trying to help students find cognates in their native language (Shatz & Wilkinson, 2010). Teachers can also help students learn the new vocabulary word by using visuals. If the class is learning about types of ocean animals for example, the teacher could bring in a variety of pictures of sharks and fish. Seeing the words in the form of a picture instead of just reading the word helps them create a more concrete understanding (Haynes, 2007).

Creating concept maps is also another great strategy to use with ELL students (Himmele & Himmele, 2010). It is important when creating concept maps that the students are the ones coming up with the connections between the concepts. This allows the ELL student time to really think deeply about the concepts and organize them in a way that makes sense to them. Practice writing the linkages between concepts is also a great way to scaffold students to be ready for informational writing. After creating a concept map students will have a much better understanding of the content, therefore will

be able to write about the concepts with much greater detail (Himmele & Himmele, 2010).

Another great strategy to help ELL students improve their academic English is allow them to sit in cooperative table groups (Haynes, 2007). The groups should be no bigger than three to four students to allow for maximum input by all members (Hill & Flynn, 2006). By having students work together on tasks ELLs are able to practice their oral language skills in a less threatening way. They also are able to learn from their peers who may be able to explain concepts to them in a different way. It is important to encourage discussion when students are working in small groups; this will help both native English speakers and English language learners better understand the content (Haynes, 2007). It is also important to use these cooperative groups on a continuous basis. Student achievement will be best if incorporated at least once per week (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

These strategies and deeper understandings of ELL students needs are just part of the answer to the research question. By incorporating some of these strategies in daily instruction ELL learners will be better able to access the material being taught. With ELL students correct scaffolding is very important for them to be able to make academic gains equal to those of native English speakers. The next section will continue along the theme of increased student achievement, this time focusing on best practices for all students.

What are the Best Practices in Literacy Instruction?

Over the years, the idea of best practices in literacy instruction have changed (Pressley & Allington, 2015). This section will take a look at the current best practices in

an attempt to answer part of the research question. Today, there is a literacy continuum on which fall different literacy practices. This continuum has skills emphasis practices on one end, meaning emphasis on the other end, and balanced literacy in the middle (Pressley, 2015). Current research has shown when each method is tested independently of the other, classrooms have had varying results. What is very effective for one classroom may be ineffective for another, and vice versa. This has led many teachers to focus more on staying in the middle of the continuum, using a balanced literacy approach (Pressley, 2015).

Balanced literacy. Balanced literacy is an approach that combines both meaning based and skills based instruction. With balanced literacy students receive phonics instruction, as well as explicit skills instruction and literature based experiences (Pressley, 2015). While there are differing views on what exactly need to be "balanced," many teachers have taken it to mean incorporating guided reading groups with literature based instruction (Pressley, 2015).

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2007), literacy is best taught by using *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*. Within this continuum there are seven different principles that are important to consider. Each of these seven continua focuses on a specific part of literacy and language development. While these continua may be taught separately, each one is an important piece of the literacy development puzzle (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011).

Interactive read aloud. The first piece of these seven principles is interactive read aloud and guided discussion. Fountas and Pinnell (2011) believed that discussing

texts, read aloud or independently, is an important part of literacy development. Many other researchers agree with this idea that reading aloud is worth the time and effort (Calkins, 2001).

According to Delo (2008), reading aloud is beneficial to students because their listening comprehension is much higher than reading on their own. This is especially true for students learning English as a second language. Students struggling with learning English may not have the skills necessary to absorb all of the information they are reading. Delo stated students who listen to science texts read aloud have a better understanding of the concepts they are learning due to teacher assistance. While reading a scientific text aloud the teacher is able to stop and model scientific thinking. When doing a read aloud from a scientific text it is also important the teacher is pointing out various text features. This will help students learn strategies to "unlock" information from the text. By seeing how to correctly read a text through teacher modeling, students can then transfer this knowledge to when they are reading on their own (Delo, 2008).

All students benefit from teachers explicitly teaching text structure and vocabulary while reading books, especially when following the reading with a discussion about the content. Burkins and Yaris (2016) described reading aloud as a "long term investment" (p. 31). Implementing read alouds in the classroom is not going to be a quick trick that magically increases standardized test scores. Over time however the benefits will come to light. Burkins and Yaris stated there are six different reasons why read alouds are so important, and the informational text strategies just as one of them.

Another benefit of doing read alouds that may not be seen when looking at standardized test scores, is in the area of classroom environment. During read aloud time students are encouraged to sit in a comfortable position as the teacher reads aloud. Students are also asked to share their thinking about the books with each other. When students are part of a shared experience such as listening to a whole group read aloud, it may also increase the feeling of classroom community. Students often love read aloud time and if the correct book is chosen will often request to hear the book. By creating this feeling of community, students will be more engaged in the lessons, and eager to participate in whole group discussions. As participation increases among students in the classroom they are able to share their ideas and learn from one another (Burkins & Yaris, 2016). While these are a few reasons why traditional read alouds have been effective there is new research to consider if the read aloud should be updated and will be discussed in the following section.

Next generation read alouds. Burkins and Yaris (2016) are proponents of using read alouds in the classroom. In their new book *Who's doing the Work?,* they introduced the idea of "next generation" read alouds. These read alouds are similar to a standard read aloud, but are enhanced to ensure that students are getting the most out of it as they can.

With these "next generation" read alouds, Burkins and Yaris proposed they should be less teacher centered and more student centered. In a traditional read aloud for example, a teacher might model a think aloud. Students are rarely asked for input, they are mainly listening to the teacher's ideas. In a next generation read aloud, this job is placed on the students. Students generate ideas and share their thoughts with a partner.

This will increase their engagement in the book, as well as in the thinking process (Burkins & Yaris, 2016).

Another difference with the next generation read aloud is it is used to get students excited about reading. In a next generation read aloud, book selection is very important. The goal is to leave students on the edge of their seats, wanting to hear more. This is different from a traditional read aloud as often teachers read books recommended by the curriculum, or books that are the "standard" read aloud books. With next generation read aloud it is important to think of the group of students, their likes and dislikes, to try and get them hooked on reading (Burkins & Yaris, 2016).

The last important difference between a next generation read aloud and a traditional read aloud is what the teacher does at the end of the reading. Traditionally, a teacher will have questions prepared ahead of time in order to lead the discussion of the text. With a next generation read aloud however the questions and discussion is left up to the students. The discussion should be guided by their own wonderings and questions with minimal teacher prompting. The next generation read aloud places more responsibility on the students. They need to be the ones reacting to the text, not just absorbing what the teacher comes up with (Burkins & Yaris, 2016).

Shared and performance reading. The second important piece of the Fountas and Pinnell continuum is shared and performance reading. With shared and performance reading students read together or take turns reading the text. In performance reading students will "perform" the text, changing their voices and expression to reflect the

meaning of the story. By performing the text in this way students are encouraged to think beyond the text and make connections with the reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 200).

Shared reading is also a very powerful tool. In shared reading, the teacher chooses a text outside of the students independent reading ability. Burkins and Yaris (2016) called shared reading a "bridge" between a read aloud and guided reading. Shared reading is different from a read aloud in that students are also reading from the text, and different from guided reading in that it can be done as a whole group lesson. Students are invited to read along with the teacher and practice reading strategies such as using context clues to understand challenging words (Burkins & Yaris, 2016, p. 54).

Shared reading has become easier to do as a whole group through the use of technology. Today many teachers are using smart boards in order to project the book for everyone to see. Another benefit of using technology for shared reading is that you can manipulate the texts as a whole group. By interacting with the texts on the board teachers are able to teach things like vocabulary, phonics, and other reading strategies (Gill & Islam, 2011).

Writing about reading. The next piece of Fountas and Pinnell's literacy continuum is writing about reading. Fountas and Pinnell believed this is important in order to strengthen the connections students are making while reading the text (2007). Writing about reading can extend student knowledge on a variety of topics, and sometimes can include students making illustrations. By writing about what they have read, students are able to reflect and extend their own learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007).

Writing about reading also helps the students explore their own thoughts on the text in a less threatening way. Research has shown students benefit from writing in their own personal reading response journals to reflect on the text (Calkins, 2001). By writing in a journal students take ownership for their own learning, and oftentimes are willing to explore deeper connections to the text. This journal is not graded on things like grammar and spelling, leaving students free to write their ideas as they wish (Lee, 2013). Students can also use these journals when working in collaborative groups. It is beneficial for ELL students to be grouped by a variety of ways. Students can work in heterogeneous groups with students of mixed language ability as well as working in same language level groups that gives them more of a "sink or swim" experience (Hill & Flynn, 2006, p. 55). After having some independent time to write, students are then encouraged to share their ideas with others. This allows students to see the connections of their classmates and to think of text in a different way. Reading response journals are especially good tools for English language learners (Lee, 2013). By writing down their thoughts first and then sharing them, they may be better able to express themselves instead of just responding on the spot.

Writing. Fountas and Pinnell (2007) believed that it is important for students to practice writing a variety of genres and write for a variety of audiences. This is different than the writing about reading approach in that students are coming up with all of the work on their own. One method many researchers believe works is to teach this type of writing through a writer's workshop model.

Writer's workshop. Writer's workshop is regarded as one of the best ways to teach writing to students (Calkins, 2001). Each writer's workshop lesson follows the same format. First it starts with the mini-lesson, students are sent off to work, mid workshop interruption, and then final share out at the end. In each workshop the students are the authors with the teacher taking on more of a "peer coach" role, rather than leading them in direct instruction. Each lesson starts out with a short mini lesson, no more than 10-15 minutes in length (Peha, 2003). During this mini lesson the teacher will model the type of writing students will be working on for the day. While students are working on their writing the teacher may walk around to do conferencing, or occasionally pull groups to work on a specific skill.

The next portion of the workshop is known as the mid workshop teaching point. This takes place after students have been writing independently for around 10-15 minutes. This interruption is used to highlight things you have seen students doing, or perhaps redirect or clarify something you are noticing in student work (Peha, 2003).

After the interruption, students continue working on their own until it is time to do the share out at the end. The share out is an important part of the workshop model because it allows students to take ownership and pride of their work. This is the time students share what they have written and is a great opportunity for teachers to highlight things they want the class to be doing. Sharing stories is often motivating for students and encourages them to write more (Peha, 2003).

The purpose of writer's workshop is for students to think of themselves as authors. Through the mini lessons they learn strategies that they can use in their future

work. Students also learn valuable skills such as self editing, peer editing and collaboration by working with others. This self and peer editing is something that sets writer's workshop apart from previous writing instruction. Whereas before students would write a piece and then turn it into a teacher for a grade, writer's workshop encourages students to edit the paper themselves. In the workshop model, teachers will never write or make corrections on student work. If corrections need to be made during a conference the teacher will write suggestions on a post it note and then leave the editing to the student. This allows the student to have full ownership of their own work, including embracing their mistakes (Peha, 2003).

At the end of each unit student work is celebrated often through a publishing party. Students are encouraged to share mistakes they have made, and share what they have learned along the way. They often will rewrite their work after they go through the editing process in order to celebrate all that they have accomplished (Peha, 2003).

Shared writing. Like shared reading, shared writing is another effective way to increase student achievement in literacy. To begin shared writing the teacher needs to remind students of a shared classroom experience. Shared writing can be done in any genre but the importance is to connect it to a previous shared experience (Dabrowski & Roth, 2016).

One example of shared writing could be writing about a field trip that the class had taken to the zoo. Depending on the focus of the lesson the teacher will be writing part of the piece, and then giving the pen over to students. If the teacher wanted to write about the zoo with a focus on capital letters and punctuation, the teacher may write the sentence

and then ask a student to come up and add the punctuation or put in the capital. Shared writing is best if it is done daily, and should not take more than 15 minutes in order to keep student engagement high (Dabrowski & Roth, 2016).

One of the most important aspects of the shared writing is to allow the students to drive the piece. They are the ones coming up with the ideas for what to write, not the teacher. That being said, it is also important for the teacher to correct mistakes along the way. The teacher needs to model correct spelling and punctuation in order to make sure the lesson is as effective as can be (Dabrowski & Roth, 2016).

Once a shared writing piece has been completed, it should be placed in a location where students are able to access it. This can be done by creating class books, writing stories on large chart paper and hanging them on the wall, or even printing out the writing and giving each student a copy to keep in their writing folder. Since students have participated in the writing they will be able to transfer the knowledge learned from the shared piece, and start using it while writing independently (Dabrowski & Roth, 2016).

Oral, visual and technological communication. Fountas and Pinnell (2007) consider oral language to be a foundational skill for literacy. They believe students should be presenting information to each other orally, and now as use of technology increases, that students should be proficient in technology as well (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). According to the common core standards, part of being literate also includes being able to take part in discussions. The standards include being able to read and summarize an article, and then present it to others (English Language Arts Standards, 2017). Oral communication skills can be practiced by implementing some of the best practices

already discussed such as shared reading, writing about reading, etc. The next piece of the continuum is less about oral language and gets back into reading and writing.

Phonics, spelling and word study. The sixth guiding principle on the Fountas and Pinnell (2005) continuum of literacy is phonics, spelling and word study. This guiding principle goes along with balanced literacy, an approach previously discussed in this chapter. There has been much debate about which is the best way to teach phonics instruction. There are some who say that all students need to learn how to read is to explicitly learn their phonics. This lead to an increase in decodable books and programs being sold, that promised to be a "fast and easy" way to teach children how to read (Goouch & Lambirth, 2008).

Words Their Way is a curriculum many researchers stand behind as a way to teach both phonics and spelling (Bear, 2000). With *Words Their Way*, students are given different word lists based on where they score on a pre-assessment. Students then are required to sort this words under different groupings. For example, a first grade student may have a sort where they are learning to separate long a from short a words. Throughout the school week students will repeat the sort and interact with the words and then are given a spelling test on Friday.

The creators of the *Words Their Way* program based their program on the different stages of spelling development (Bear, 2000). They believe that there are five stages along a spelling continuum and that students will progress through the continuum over time. The first stage of the continuum is known as the *emergent stage* (Bear, 2000).

The *emergent stage* is typically seen in students from Pre-Kindergarten until the middle of first grade. Emergent spelling is often seen in students who are not reading and have not had access to formal reading instruction. Emergent spelling starts with students producing what look like scribbles and then starts to include the most prominent sounds in the word (Bear, 2000).

After the *emergent stage* students move to the *letter name-alphabetic spelling stage*. This stage typically extends from kindergarten through the middle of second grade. In this stage students frequently use the names of the letters when they are writing. They also frequently only use the letter when writing frequently used words like "are" and "you" so the words appear as "R" and "U". Students in this stage are starting to segment the sounds in words and by the end of this stage they have full phonemic awareness (Bear, 2000).

The next stage in the spelling continuum is known as *within word pattern spelling.* Students in this stage are able to spell many words correctly because they know short vowel sounds and have automaticity with letter sounds. This spelling stage usually takes place starting for some students at the end of first grade and typically ends in third or occasionally even fourth grade. Spellers in this stage are able to spell words by using chunks or patterns, and are moving away from spelling words sound by sound. Many students in this stage are working on CVCe words as well as learning homophones (Bear, 2000).

The fourth stage in the continuum is called the *syllables and affixes spelling* stage and is typically seen in upper elementary grades and occasionally in middle school. In

this stage students move from CVC and VCC words and start learning syllables and affixes. Students in this stage also are learning to spell by adding inflectional endings. They benefit from studying and learning how to spell base words and then practice adding derivational affixes (Bear, 2000).

The final stage in the spelling continuum is known as the *derivational relations spelling* stage. This stage is occasionally seen in students as early as grade four or grade five, but is more commonly seen in middle school, high school or even college. In this level students are learning about the morphology of English, and are able to generate thousands of words independently. In this stage understanding the connection between spelling and meaning can help students greatly expand their vocabulary (Bear, 2000). Spelling and word study is a great way for students to expand their vocabulary. By being aware of the different spelling stages, teachers can fine tune their instruction to make sure students are getting what they need. The next subsection will continue to discuss best practice ways to increase students achievement in literacy.

Guided reading. The final principle in the Fountas and Pinnell continuum is known as guided reading. With guided reading students are reading in a small group, and are reading a book chosen by the teacher based on their instructional reading level. This book should be a little challenging for the student to read and they will need teacher support to get through it. Each guided reading lesson will include teaching an explicit reading skill (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). As students interact with the book it is important for teachers to be watching for what next steps they need to take to increase their reading

level. Guided reading is the last area to give support before students reach independence (Burkins & Yaris, 2016).

After reading, students will discuss the story they have just read and try to think beyond the text. Discussion after reading is one of the most important components of a guided reading lesson. Due to the small size of the group, it is much easier for the teacher to hear everyone's ideas about the text. This is a great opportunity for the teacher to sort out any misconceptions that the students may have, or to ask students guiding questions to help them make deeper connections with the text (Burkins & Yaris, 2016).

Differentiated word work may also be a component of the guided reading lesson. The word work may be related to a phonics skill that the student is struggling with, or perhaps a new spelling pattern (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). Word work time during the guided reading lesson is often a great chance to check in with how students are performing individually.

Independent reading. The importance of independent reading time has been debated in recent years. The way teachers implement it has also changed. For awhile teachers were implementing "Drop Everything and Read" time, yet today few continue with this practice (Burkins & Yaris, 2010). Today teachers are implementing independent reading time, where students are left to read independently by themselves. During independent reading time students are allowed to choose their own books. The benefits of letting students choose their own books is that they stay much more engaged during reading time when they have their own choice. Students may choose more than one book

to read during independent reading, and should be encouraged to choose books that they are interested in (Burkins & Yaris, 2010).

While students are reading independently teachers can check in with them and do a one on one conference. These conferences should not last any longer than five minutes, by lasting longer than five minutes the students are losing valuable reading time (Burkins & Yaris, 2010).

When fully implemented all of these best practice strategies create an evenly balanced literacy program. These best practice ideas will all be implemented in the curriculum written to answer the question: What are the best practices in literacy to increase achievement in fourth grade ELL students? When combining these known best practices with the ELL specific strategies from the prior sections, ELL achievement will improve.

Summary

This chapter started off by discussing the specific stages and needs of ELL students. Without having an understanding of how ELL students are different than native English speakers, there would be no way to answer the research question: How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English Language Learners by incorporating balanced literacy techniques? Looking specifically at special needs for ELL students will lay a good foundation when writing the next chapters. The other main part of this chapter was discussing the continuum of literacy.

The next chapter in this capstone, chapter three, discusses the methods used to write the curriculum. The chapter describes the type of school the curriculum will be

implemented, as well as discussing why the curriculum will be important. Chapter three

will also take a look at how the curriculum came to be designed, and strategies for

implementation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Too Little Time

Ding-ding. Another email pops up on the screen, this one from the assistant principal. "Good morning teachers, I am pleased to announce we will be hosting a food for life event on Thursday morning at 8am. Please have your class memorize the following poem so they can recite it for the parents. Thank you!"

After reading the email I take a look at the clock- 10:45. Today is Tuesday. That means we have around three hours left of today, and then some time tomorrow to have the students memorize this poem. I look over at my schedule and realize with the three hours we have left only 40 minutes of them are English instructional time. Looks like we won't be doing writer's workshop today.

As I cross writer's workshop off of our schedule and start to create a PowerPoint to teach the poem, I take a look at my lesson plans. This is the fourth time I have had to cut writer's workshop this month. Special events seem to be popping up left and right. I wish I had a better way to organize my literacy blocks to ensure students are learning to their full potential…

Introduction

Lack of time is a common complaint among teachers today. Between events, district assessments, or state mandated assessments teachers frequently feel like there is not enough time in the day. This can cause stress among the teachers, wondering which areas of the school day they should cut out or prioritize. Unfortunately, oftentimes the

things that get cut from the school day are essential to helping students achieve. The importance of time management in the classroom led me to the research question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English Language Learners by incorporating balanced literacy technique?*

This chapter discusses the methods used to create a curriculum looking to lessen this problem by combining writer's workshop with other best practice teaching methods. The curriculum will be provided as a total literacy unit plan, incorporating Reader's and Writer's Workshop lessons with other best practices in literacy such as shared reading and shared writing. The curriculum has been designed with this question in mind: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English Language Learners by incorporating balanced literacy technique?* This chapter explains the rationale behind writing this curriculum, as well as giving an understanding of the school that it will be used in. It will also discuss the type of curriculum design that was followed.

The School

The school that this curriculum will be implemented in is a private K-12 located in Central America but could also be implemented in any school with a large ELL population. The school follows the American school system schedule, as well as many of the same curriculums seen in the US school system such as Reader's and Writer's Workshop. Students graduating from this school are eligible to receive a US high school diploma. Students attending this school all come from wealthy families, and over 90% of them are learning English as a second language.

The school offers an immersion bilingual program with students spending half the day learning in Spanish, and the other half learning in English. Students are placed in classrooms of approximately 25 students, and have three different teachers. Each classroom has a native English speaker to teach English, a native Spanish teacher for Spanish, and then an extra bilingual teacher to provide additional student support. All native English teachers are foreign hires, coming to work with initial contracts of two years. The school offers a subsidized Master's program, so many of the foreign teachers either have their Master's already, or are currently working towards one.

Students are treated as though they are native English speakers, which unfortunately creates a language gap that continues to widen as students pass through the grades.

The curriculum currently followed by the school for both readers and writers workshop is the Units of Study program by Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 2001). The Units of Study include specific teaching points for teachers to follow, and includes some formative and summative assessments along the way. In these reading and writing lessons students are given the opportunity to have a lot of independent work time, which is very beneficial for their reading and writing.

All teachers are required to use both of these curriculums during literacy time. Teachers often feel that due to the number of special events and assessments however, that the students are not learning at their best potential when strictly following these two curriculums.

Rationale

This curriculum is needed to address one of the major issues faced by teachers at this school, which is the lack of background knowledge due to English language level. Students are learning in two languages throughout the day so it essentially cuts instruction time for each teacher in half. Most students do not spend time speaking English at home, so they are only exposed to English vocabulary a few hours per day.

Another thing that is cutting instructional time are extra events. Since this school is a private school there is often more pressure coming from parents to have extra events such as family bingo days, or field days. These events are often scheduled at the last minute, leaving teachers scrambling to make last minute instructional decisions. To remedy this a curriculum including the best practices of balanced literacy needs to be followed. This way teachers will have a detailed overview of what needs to be taught and when, making it so that certain best practices are not always being cut.

This curriculum will be written to be used as pre-teaching to the third unit in the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for both reading and writing. It will give students more background knowledge in working with nonfiction texts. In addition to addressing the issue of lack of time in the school day, this curriculum will also incorporate specific ELL strategies to help students be more successful. Within the unit plan of the curriculum there will be special focus areas to help teachers see how small changes could improve their ELL students academic skills. This is not something that is currently done in this school and needs to be addressed.

Audience

The curriculum is written for fourth grade teachers who want to improve the effectiveness of their literacy instruction. The curriculum is beneficial to teachers who have many ELL students and who may be short on instructional time. The curriculum is for teachers who are currently using a workshop model for reading or writing, but would like a more detailed outline of how to truly use balanced literacy.

The curriculum has been designed with the Common Core (Development Process, 2017) standards in mind, making sure to address specific literacy standards needed to cover in fourth grade.

Design

The design for the curriculum follows the workshop model as written by Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 2001). The curriculum was written with the end goal in mind, trying to answer the research question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?* In order to answer this question the curriculum was designed to be used as pre-teaching unit, implemented before the informational reading and writing units of Lucy Calkins' Units of Study curriculum.

Guidelines

The curriculum was written in alignment with the Common Core standards. The Common Core standards were created in 2009 by 48 states working together on what they considered to be the best practices in education. The Common Core standards look to create a balanced and equal education for all students across the USA, regardless of

what state that student is in. The Common Core standards were written with a focus on

college and career readiness (Development Process, 2017).

The Common Core standards addressed in the curriculum are part of the English

Language Arts section. The English Language Arts standards that are addressed in the

curriculum are the following:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details;
summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs,
diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how
the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about
the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information
clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different
aspects of a topic ("English Language Arts," 2017)

Human Subjects Committee

The Human Subjects Committee exempt short application was submitted to the

committee. This short form included a detailed proposal of the curriculum project, and an

overview of the research. The proposal was approved by Hamline School of Education

before the creation of the curriculum plan.

Summary

This chapter has explained the reasoning behind the curriculum to answer the question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?* The following chapter will include the curriculum written to address this guiding question.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Results

"So now you know that dolphins and sharks are alike in many ways, but also very different…" This is the end of the third research presentation for the day. Students were tasked with research projects on a topic of their choice, and needed to compare and contrast the two topics in a final presentation. Overall I am very impressed with the results of the presentations. Students have been working hard for weeks, researching every day and sharing their research with other group members to create a cohesive final presentation.

One student in particular really shined during this unit. She is relatively shy, mainly due to the fact that this is only her second year learning English. She transferred to our school last year from a Spanish-only academy. Last year she was barely able to say two sentences in English and today she has completed a five minute group presentation. Throughout the research project she was supported by her group members. They were able to help her translate and organize her ideas by using graphic organizers we created as a class. Having an additional scaffold helped many of the ELL students in my class, but for her it made a world of difference.

Overview

The purpose of this unit is to be used as a scaffold before the informational units of the Lucy Calkin's Units of Study, specifically before the unit Reading the Weather, Reading the World (Calkins & Butler Smith, 2015). The unit was written to answer the

question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?* It was written as a way to give English Language Learners (ELL) a chance to interact with informational text in a much more scaffolded way, first as a whole group and then with a partner. By scaffolding it this way, students will have more experience working with complex texts before being asked to work independently. This curriculum was split into two different parts. Both parts include lessons in a workshop format with both shared reading and writing activities.

Unit Framework

This unit was written following the framework of a workshop model as designed by Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 2001). It is written to be used at a time of year when students have already been taught the expectations of setting up for workshop, and they should have regular routines and stamina for working independently built up. Students should be comfortable with the workshop format, and it is important to keep these scaffolded lessons structured the same way to help students feel successful (Calkins, 2001).

Each lesson starts out with a connection to hook students and grab their interest in the lesson. Some connections are longer and more engaging than others, but should help students recall prior knowledge before starting the lesson. The next piece of the lesson in the curriculum is the teaching point. This is where the teacher will state exactly what the students will be working on. By stating the teaching point students are able to understand what they are expected to do, and are able to add the skills to their own reading toolbox (Calkins, 2001).

After the teaching point the teacher will do modeling to ensure that students see how the skill is done properly. This modeling should be short, only five to eight minutes to ensure that students have the proper amount of time for practicing on their own. Once the teacher has modeled students are asked to practice the skill with a partner as the teacher looks on. This is a time to monitor and assist students who may be struggling with the skill.

Before sending the students off to work it is important to use a Link and remind students of the skill they will be working on. It is important to keep the wording of the teaching point consistent to ensure that students understand their task. In a regular workshop lesson from the Units of Study, students are asked to work independently on the task modeled by the teacher (Calkins, 2001). The curriculum is written with more scaffolding and asks students to work with a partner on many of the lessons (see Appendix A).

Once students have had time to work with their partners it is important that the class gathers together at the end to share some of their work from the day. Depending on the lesson, some of these shares will have students sharing with other partners, or perhaps sharing with the whole group. This allows everyone to reflect on their learning of the day, and helps give them a deeper understanding of the skills they have just practiced together.

Pre-Unit Setup

Before launching this unit it is important to teach students the expectations for workshop. Set expectations for turn and talk time, partner work, and sharing before the unit starts. It is also helpful to create partnerships before the unit starts. Each student

should have a partner at their same language ability, as well as one who is working at a higher language level than they are. It is also important to have a variety of leveled informational books for students to read. Students should have access to books at their independent level, and at their instructional level as well.

Another thing to consider before starting the unit is where students are going to work with their partners. Decide if students will sit at desks, assigned spaces around the classroom, or if they will be allowed to choose. If students are not used to working in partners it may be best to assign them areas to work.

Curriculum writing learnings

Writing the curriculum for me was a relatively easy process. The school I work in requires teachers to write and revise curriculums throughout the school year so I had a lot of prior experience before starting this project. One challenge I had was creating a curriculum that could be used with a broader audience in mind and not just for my current students. Another challenge that I had was to explain things more thoroughly than normal, keeping in mind that teachers reading this curriculum may not be familiar with a workshop model.

Conclusion

In conclusion the creation of this curriculum allowed me to reflect on my teaching practices. By writing out my own curriculum based on research, I was able to better plan out the unit and really think about the "why" behind activities in each lesson. I tried to incorporate what I felt were best practices and still keep the lessons short and easy to follow.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The Conclusion

It's the last week of school and my students are creating a video to show their parents summarizing some of our major learnings this year. The class is split into different groups by subject they would like to talk about. As I am walking around checking in with the groups, I notice that one group seems a bit off task- they are talking very loudly and laughing. I go over to check in with them and overhear them re-telling stories we have written together. They are all bent over laughing, re-telling a story we had written together in March about a girl who got lost in a castle. The stories were all created with their ideas. Students worked in partners, or small groups and decided on different events and characters to add to our class story. "That was the best!" I overhear them saying. These stories were created during our shared writing time, and helped them become much more enthusiastic and creative writers when writing independently.

Reflections on Major Learning

Shared reading and shared writing were the biggest take aways when answering the question *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?* Reflecting upon the capstone process I believe that I learned a lot about how powerful both shared reading and writing can be, especially for ELL students. Research discussed in Chapter two has shown that ELL students need a more focused and explicit curriculum. By using shared reading and writing, teachers are better able to guide students through the full process before releasing

them to work independently. Students learning English as a second language should have lessons adapted specifically for the building of English vocabulary, through the use of things like graphic organizers or pre-teaching vocabulary. English Language Learners should also have plenty of time to work collaboratively in groups, both with students at their same language level as well as students whose English level is higher than theirs. It is important for ELL students to discuss with partners as well in small groups (DelliCarpini et. al, 2009). By reading with students and helping them through challenging texts ELL students are able to learn new strategies for tackling tricky texts on their own (Burkins & Yaris 2016).

When thinking about previous years of teaching, I see where I have made mistakes in teaching English language learners. While researching I was able to learn new strategies to help ELL students, and to help students learn in a more efficient way. In the past I feel that I overlooked or ignored implementing some of these strategies do to a lack of time, or a feeling that I needed to rush through the curriculum to get everything covered. Having a better understanding of English language development however, I now know that some of the strategies that I once thought were "time wasters" are actually extremely beneficial for students struggling with English. When struggling to help these students I felt that I needed to know more which led me to the question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?*

Implications of the Study

This study was based on the research that ELL students benefit from working more collaboratively in groups. Educators could look at this and realize that strategic grouping is very beneficial for ELL students, and is not a very difficult change to implement in the classroom. The research showing that ELL students benefit from mixed language ability grouping could also change the way that ELL students are thought about in terms of pull-out instruction. This study could also help teachers decide if it is better for students spend more time with peers speaking at a higher language level than them, or to group them with same ability classmates.

Limitations of the study

One major limitation of the curriculum was written in a setting where almost all of the English language learners spoke the same native language. That meant that when they were struggling with words or ideas, they could discuss them first in Spanish, before translating them together into English. This would be harder to do in a classroom where there are many English language learners, but few who speak the same native language.

Another important thing to note is that these students have been learning in a workshop model for at least three years. They are comfortable with the routines, and understand the ideas and the structure of a mini-lesson format. This might be more challenging at schools where the workshop model is new.

Literature Review

When starting the literature review process to answer the question *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?* I felt that the best place to start was to learn about the

specific needs of English language learning students. The common theme that I found while researching was the idea that ELL students benefit from working together in collaborative groups. The research stated that it is best to change up grouping based on the activity (Hill & Flynn, 2006). I incorporated this idea into the curriculum by having students work with partners of various language levels, with shared discussions at the end of the lesson.

Research I found also discussed the importance of using graphic organizers to help ELLs organize their learning (Allyn, 2014). Multiple lessons in the curriculum include the use of graphic organizers to encourage ELLs, and non-ELLs to expand their thinking (see Appendix A). In many of the lessons students are working on creating graphic organizers together with a partner, therefore including the best practice ideas from both of these pieces of research.

Keeping the lessons short is another piece of research from the literature review that was used in the curriculum (Calkins, 2001). Research has shown that it is important to keep lessons short, around 15 minutes, to ensure that students are highly engaged the whole time (Peha, 2003). By piecing together ideas from the literature review I was able to create a curriculum to answer the question: *How can I make the Units of Study more accessible to English language learners by incorporating balanced literacy practices?*

Future Research

While writing this curriculum focused on ELL students and their needs I felt as though I could have written this curriculum in a variety of different ways. Due to the literature review focus on different aspects of balanced literacy however I decided to

stick with a strictly literacy focus. As I did research I became more interested in the use of technology and how technology could be incorporated into lessons to make learning English easier. In the future I would like to continue researching this and see if technology could help ELL students during Reader's Workshop time.

Using the Results

I plan on using the curriculum as a framework and incorporating it into my daily routine. I specifically plan on using the research on student grouping and graphic organizers when planning future lessons. I also plan on sharing the curriculum with other members of my grade level team, as all of us are working with ELL students. By sharing the results, it will hopefully inspire others to make more research based decisions when creating groups in their own classrooms.

Summary

The evidence presented in the capstone shows how important it is to think of English language learners and their struggles with language acquisition. Research has shown that the ELL population has been steadily increasing in US public schools and shows no sign of stopping. By increasing the amount of scaffolding and using short curriculums such as this, English language learners can become more successful in mainstream classes. It is up to classroom teachers to implement some of these strategies, and help all students become successful readers.

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APPENDIX A

Note: These lessons are written to be used before Unit 2 in the Lucy Calkins Unit of Study Reading unit (Calkins & Butler Smith, 2015). These lessons are meant to give students a refresher in informational texts, reviewing things that they should have learned in 3rd grade. This unit is not meant to teach each standard to proficiency, it is meant to help students feel successful reading and understanding informational texts before launching the intensive Calkins unit. It is most beneficial to use with ELL students who need explicit instruction and guidance when taking notes and comprehending informational texts.

Standards addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

This unit will contain 10, 45-60 minute lessons, and will include strategies that support ELL learners as well as using strategies for a balanced literacy approach.

Lesson: 1
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Pre-lesson preparation:

Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students. During work time students will work with a partner, decide if you would like to have assigned reading partners for this unit. ELL students may benefit from working with a strong English speaker during this lesson. For the teaching part of the lesson make sure to choose a book that includes different text features.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Hold up a fiction story that you have previously read as a class, and at the same time hold up an informational text. Have students turn and talk to discuss the differences between the two types of books.

Teaching Point
Good readers use text structure to understand an informational text.

Whole Group Teaching: (8 minutes)
Today we are going to start digging deeper into informational books. Informational books are organized in a different way than fiction books and today we will do a shared reading to look at some of these text features together.

Project shared reading text that you have chosen and model how to use text features to get started reading the book. Start by discussing the table of contents and then model doing a walk through the book using other text features such as pictures, charts, diagrams, etc. talking specifically about how these things help you get a better idea for the main idea of the text.

Student involvement: (7 minutes)

After doing a walk through the text invite students to follow along as you read aloud the first chapter. Pause as you read, making sure to use text features to help understand the main ideas of the text.

Send off:

Today you will work with a partner and start to dive into informational books. Make sure to discuss with your partner how text structure can help you understand the content.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)

Students should work with their partner to read informational books of their choice.

Share (3 minutes)

Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students discuss the following questions:

1. What did you learn about in your book today?
2. How did the text features help you understand the new topic?
3. Why is it important to remember to look at text features each time you read an informational text?

Lesson: 2
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students. During work time students will again work with a partner, decide if you would like to have the same partner as in Lesson 1. ELL students may benefit from working with a strong English speaker during this lesson. For the teaching part of the lesson use the same book that you used to teach text features in lesson 1. Students will also need to bring a post-it note and a pencil to take notes during the active engagement.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Yesterday we worked on understanding informational books by looking at text features. Today we are going to be looking at the text features again, this time looking more closely to help us determine the main idea.

Teaching Point
Good readers determine the main idea of a text and can explain how it is supported with key details.

Whole Group Teaching: (6 minutes)
Today we are going to work to determine the main idea of a text. We also need to find key details from the text that help us know this is the main idea.

Project same shared reading text that you used for the lesson yesterday. Tell students what the main idea of the text is, and show them how to find key details to prove this is the main idea. Record the main idea and key details in the following graphic organizer. Make sure to explain to students how each detail needs to go in it's own box. Model how to find the details with 2 of the 3 key detail boxes.

Main idea:

Key Detail #1

Key Detail #2

Key Detail #3
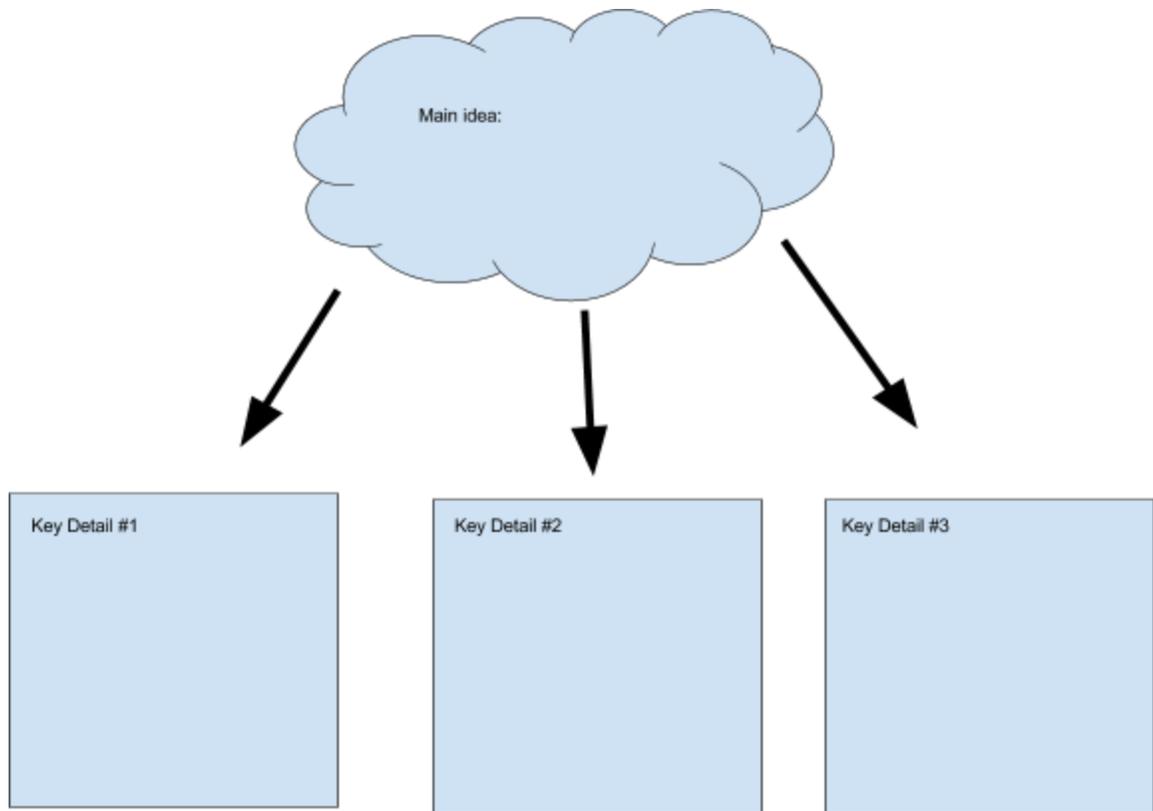
Student involvement: (6 minutes)
Have students work with their turn and talk partner to find another detail to support the main idea. Students should record their answers on a post-it note, collecting specific evidence from the text. Have a few students share out what key details they found to support the main idea.

Send off:
Today you will work with a partner and start to dive into informational books. Make sure to discuss with your partner how text structure can help you understand the content.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to read informational books of their choice. They each should have their own copy of the graphic organizer to fill out. Encourage students to record other key details on the back if they find more than 3.

Share (5 minutes)

Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students share their graphic organizers. Have them reflect on the following questions:

1. Why is it important to find details to support the main idea?
2. What should I do if I can't find details to support the main idea I've chosen?

Lesson: 3
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students. During work time students will again work with their partner. ELL students will benefit from having a book on a similar topic to the one they have been working with in lessons 1 and 2.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Play this short song to remind students of the main idea.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEAPBT7ZFyo (Scott, 2017)

Teaching Point
Good readers determine the main idea of a text with key details and summarize what they have read.

Whole Group Teaching: (6 minutes)
Today we are going to work again on finding the main idea of a text. We also need to use key details from the text to help us summarize what we have read.

Project same shared reading text that you used for the lesson yesterday. Show students the graphic organizer that you completed together yesterday, this time with a place to add the summary. Remind students of the main idea and details from yesterday and then tell them the summary that you would write for the text.
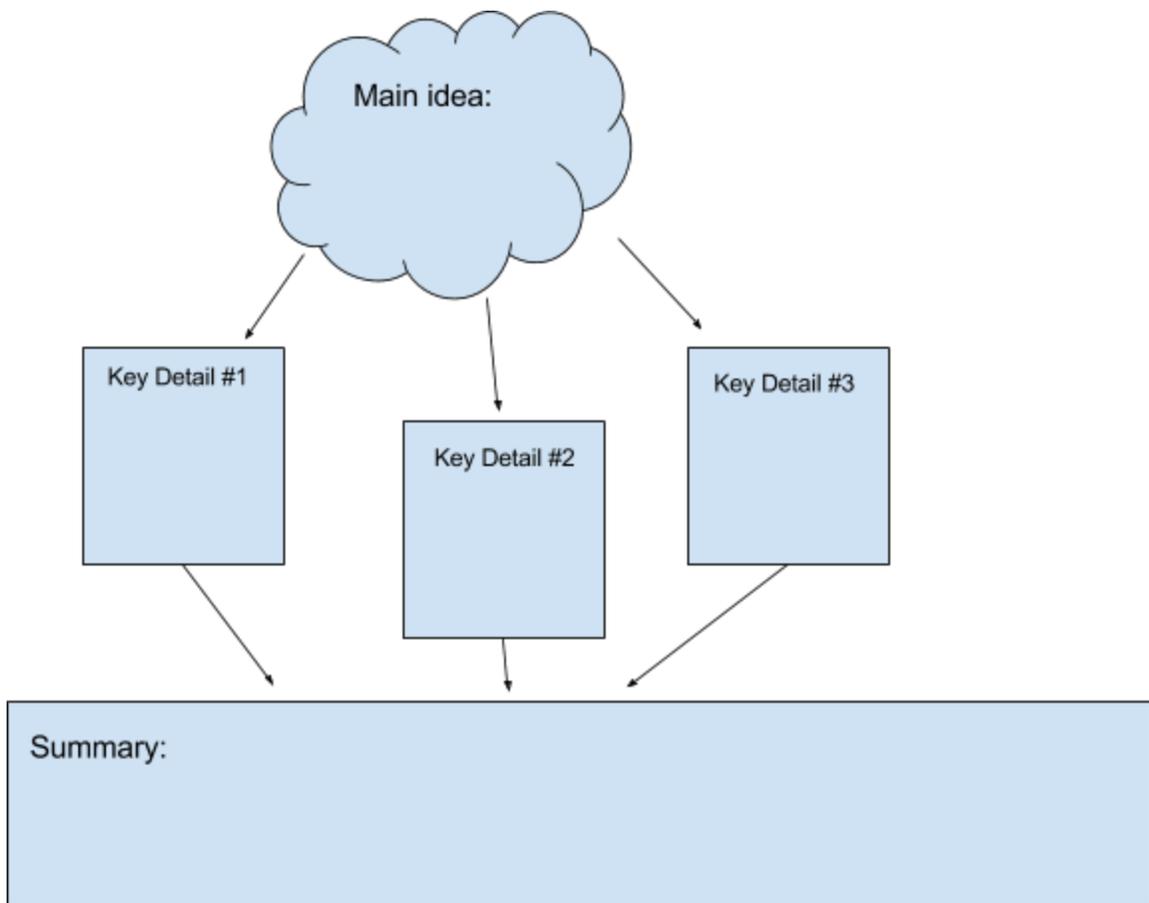
Student Involvement: (6 minutes)
Show students a new graphic organizer that you have filled out ahead of time. The organizer should have the main idea as well as key details. Have students use this graphic organizer to come up with a summary with their turn and talk partner. Give time for students to share out their summary ideas to clear up any misconceptions before it is time for them to go to work.

Send off:
Today with your partner you will read a new book and take notes in this graphic organizer. Make sure to find the main idea and include details. Once you have found enough evidence work together to write a summary of the book.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)

Students should work with their partner to read informational books of their choice. They each should have their own copy of the graphic organizer to fill out. Encourage students to record other key details on the back if they find more than 3.Remind students to wait and write the summary after they have found many key details that support the main idea.

Share (5 minutes)
Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students share their graphic organizers. Have them reflect on the following questions:
1. How does using a graphic organizer help you write a good summary?
2. What do informational books include that make it easier to determine the main idea?

Lesson: 4
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 55 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books available for each topic. During work time students will again work with their partner.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Hold up a few informational books that are all different yet written about the same topic. Discuss with students how researchers look at multiple sources to find notes.

Teaching Point
Good readers research multiple texts about the same topic to write about the subject knowledgeably.

Whole Group Teaching: (10 minutes)
Today we are going to learn even more about our topic by using other texts to find more facts about what we have already been learning.

Project a new shared reading text that is on the same topic that you used for the lesson yesterday. Show students the completed graphic organizer that you worked on together the day before. Now, show students a blank graphic organizer which you will fill in together on your new book. In this graphic organizer the main idea should stay the same (or very similar) but point out how key details are now different than the previous book. Explain to students that you are looking for different details in order to broaden your knowledge on the subject. Quickly fill out the organizer with students and hang it next to

the organizer from the previous lesson.
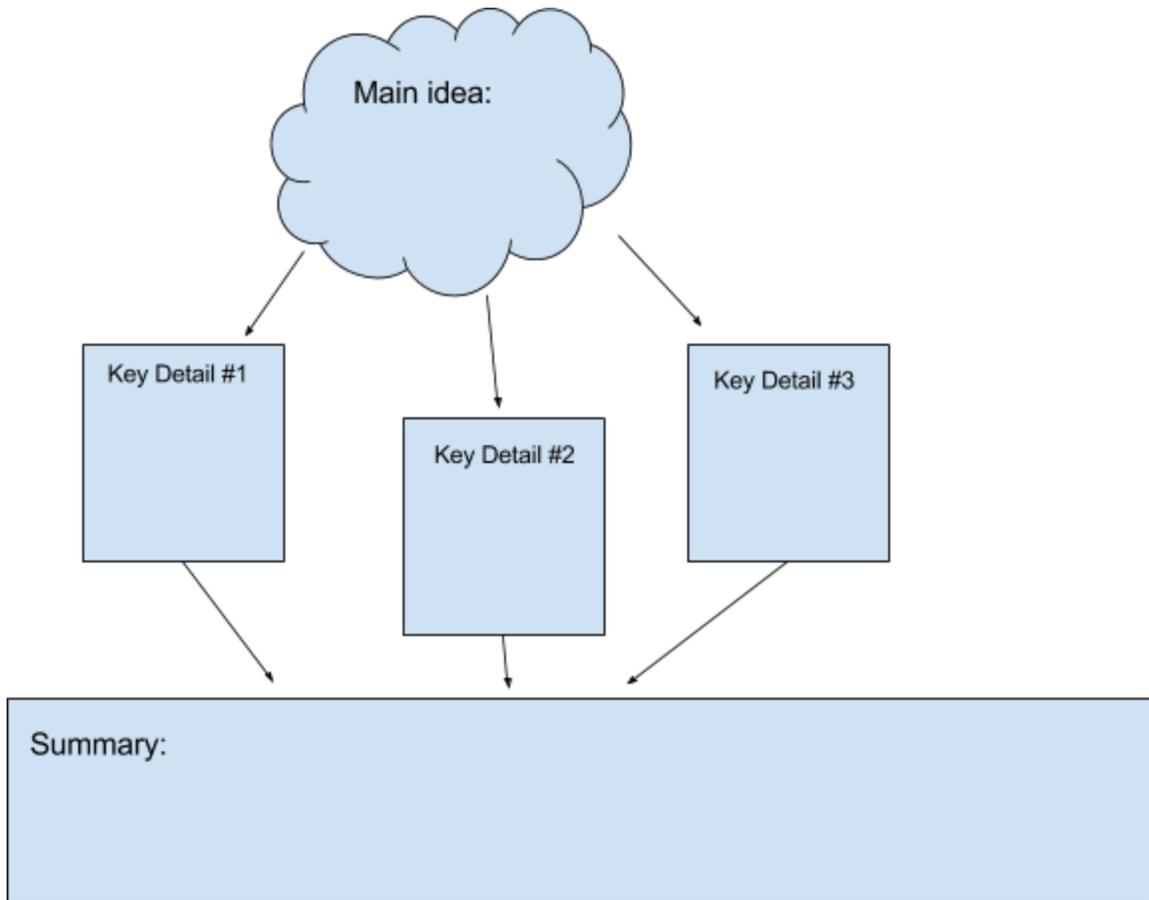
Student Involvement: (6 minutes)
Have students turn and talk the differences they notice with these graphic organizers.
Have them discuss the following questions:
1. What is similar information in both of these texts?
2. What is new information?
3. Why is it important to look at more than one source when researching a topic?

Send off:
Today with your partner you will read a new book and take notes in another graphic
organizer. Make sure to find the main idea and include details. Once you have found
enough evidence work together to write a summary of the book. After you have
completed the new organizer you should discuss new information that you have learned
about your topic.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to read a new informational book on their same topic. They each should have their own copy of the graphic organizer to fill out. Encourage students to record other key details on the back if they find more than 3. Remind students to wait and write the summary after they have found many key details that support the main idea. Students should then compare the two organizers to discuss new information.

Share (5 minutes)
Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students share their graphic organizers. Have them reflect on the following questions:
1. What is some new information you learned about your topic today?
2. Which book was easier for you to understand? What made it easier to understand?

Lesson: 5
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details;
summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about
the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs,
diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how
the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics.
Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc.
Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books
available for each topic. It would also be helpful to compile a list of good
websites/youtube videos/online articles for students to use for research. Students will
again be working with their same partner.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Show a short informational video where students can learn new information about any
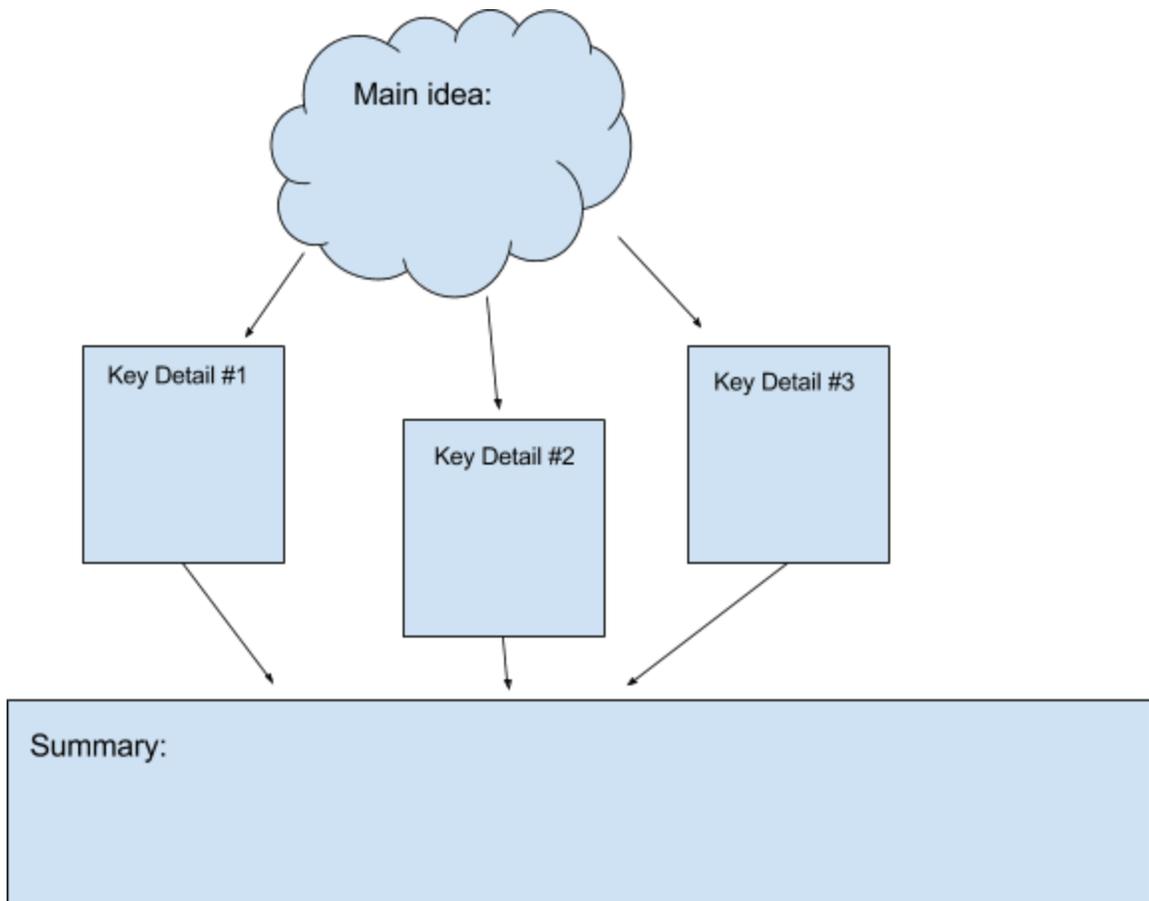topic.

Teaching Point
Good readers research and interpret information found on the internet and explain how
this information contributes to their topic.

Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)
Today we are going to learn even more about our topic by researching online to find
more facts about what we have already been learning. Sometimes as researchers we may
want to use videos and websites in addition to books to find new information about our
topic.

Project a website where you have found good information for the topic you have been
researching as a class. Model how to fill out the graphic organizer with the text and text

features from the website. Write a quick summary to model finishing the graphic organizer with this new resource.

Student Involvement: (5-10 minutes)
Show students a short video related to the topic. Ask them to take notes in their notebook trying to figure out the main idea as well as key details. When the video is over have them discuss their findings with their turn and talk partner. Have a few students share out and fill out a new graphic organizer based on the short video.

Send off:
Today you learned that we can get information about our topic from a website as well as a video. With your partner I want to you look at some new resources and remember to take notes in your graphic organizer.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)

Students should work with their partner to research their topic online. They each should have their own copy of the graphic organizer to fill out. Encourage students to record other key details on the back if they find more than 3. Remind students to wait and write the summary after they have found many key details that support the main idea. Students should then create organizers for each resource as a way to keep their information organized.

Share (5 minutes)
Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students share their graphic organizers. Have them reflect on the following questions:

1. How do you feel about your research today? Did you find many good resources about your topic?
2. What do you feel made a good resource? Are there any resources that you would like to recommend to others?

Lesson: 6
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books available for each topic. It would also be helpful to compile a list of good websites/youtube videos/online articles for students to use for research. Students will again be working with their same partner.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Show a short informational video where students can learn new information about any topic.

Teaching Point
Good readers can write an informative text to teach others about their topic.
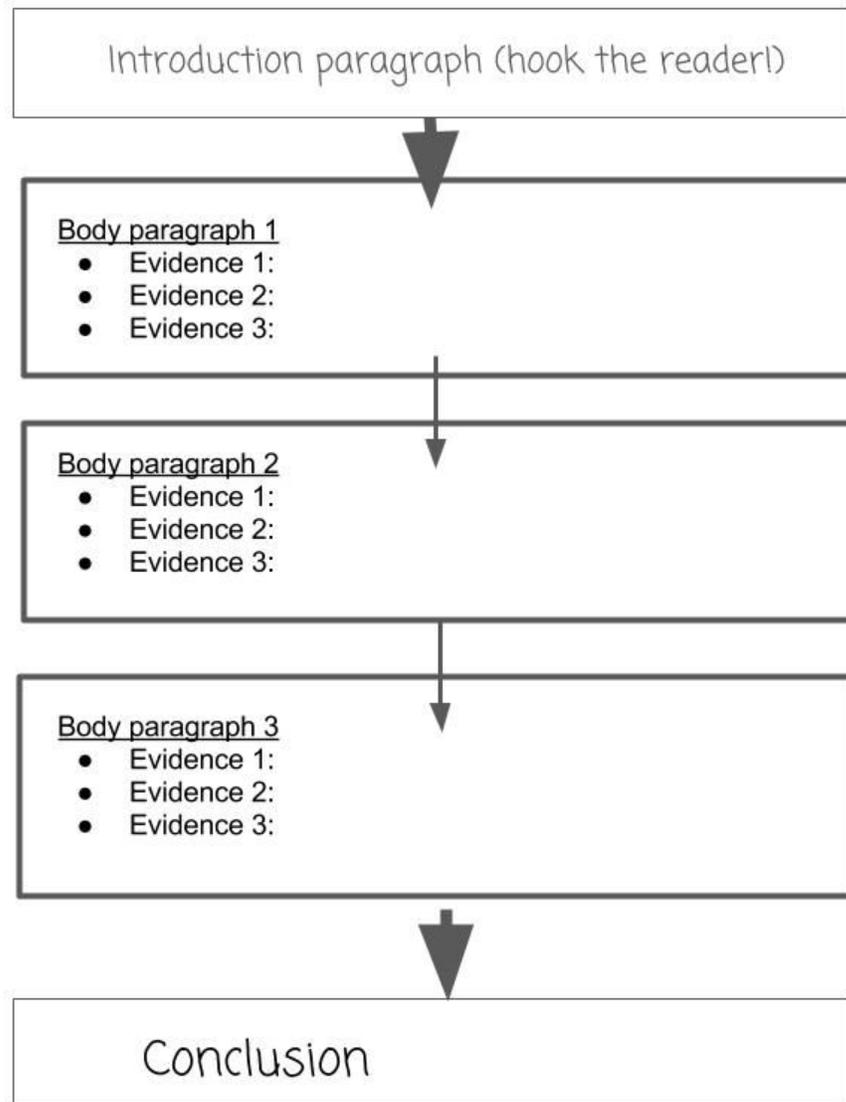
Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)

Show a short video clip about how to plan an informational text.

Today we are going to take the research we have been doing and turn it into an informational book. As we saw in that video we know that the first thing good writers do is make a plan for their writing.

Gather all of the graphic organizers that you have previously made as a class. As you go through them think aloud about how your book could be organized. During this time it is important to note what else you would like to add to your book, make a plan for future research.

Informational Book Planner

Introduction paragraph (hook the reader!)

Body paragraph 1
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Body paragraph 2
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Body paragraph 3
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Conclusion

Student Involvement: (10 minutes)
Have students work with their reading partner and create a plan for their writing. Students should have all of their graphic organizers and draw up an outline of how they would like

their book to go. Students should use Informational Book Planner to help them include all the important parts of their story. After many students have finished their plan allow a few to share out their ideas in order to help students who may be struggling.

Send off:
Today we came up with a plan for how we would like our informational books to go. Keep this plan in mind as you read, adding more key details about your topic to your graphic organizers.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to research their topic online or in books. They should have their writing plan with them to keep them on track as they do their research. Encourage students to record other key details on the back if they find more than 3. Remind students to wait and write the summary after they have found many key details that support the main idea. Students should continue taking notes on their tip

Share (5 minutes)
Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. With their turn and talk partner, have students share their graphic organizers. Have them reflect on the following questions:
1. How do you feel about your research today? Did you find many good resources about your topic?
2. What do you feel made a good resource? Are there any resources that you would like to recommend to others?
3. What is your plan for tomorrow? What information do you still need to find?

Lesson: 7
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

*Note: This writing is meant to be brief, just to give a short refresher in how to organize and then write an informational book.

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books available for each topic. It would also be helpful to compile a list of good websites/youtube videos/online articles for students to use for research. Students will again be working with their same partner.

Connection: (2 minutes)
Show a picture of a daily schedule. Have students turn and talk about what else we could call a schedule. "A plan"
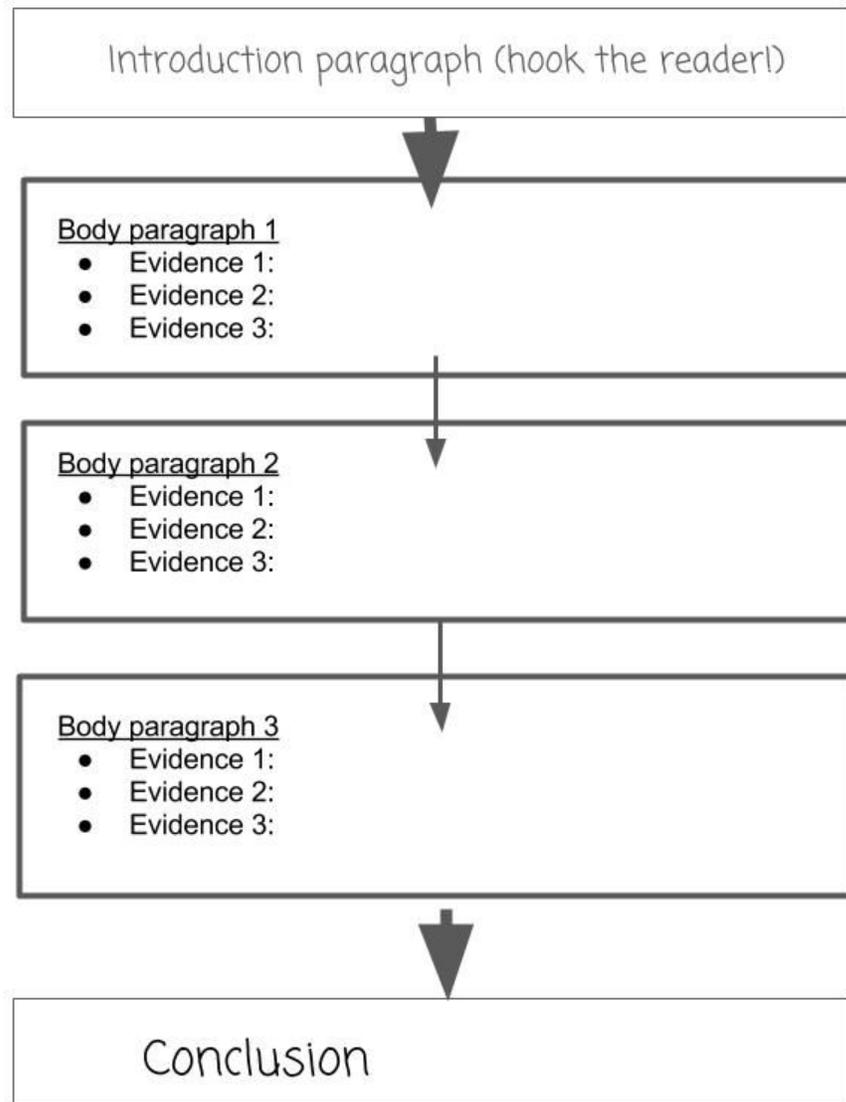
Teaching Point
Good readers can use their writing plan to write an informative text about a topic.

Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)
Today we are going to take our plan from yesterday and the research we have been doing and turn it into an informational book. One of the most important parts of an informational book is a good introduction. You can start an informational book in different ways but it is important to hook your reader.

Using information from the graphic organizers you created with a class, think aloud 3-4 different introductions that you could use for your book. Remember to refer back to your writing plan and talk through how each introduction would fit with the plan for your book.

Informational Book Planner

Introduction paragraph (hook the reader!)

Body paragraph 1
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Body paragraph 2
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Body paragraph 3
- Evidence 1:
- Evidence 2:
- Evidence 3:

Conclusion

Student Involvement: (7 minutes)

Have students work with their turn and talk partner to see if they can come up with a new way to start the class informational book. Give students the pen and let them take turns creating interesting beginnings to the book. Decide together which introduction you like the best and record that as the beginning to your class informational book.

Send off:

Today we came up with an introduction for our class book. Now with your partner you will work to come up with an introduction for the book you will be creating. Remember to use your writing plan from yesterday as well as your graphic organizers for more information. When you are done with your introduction use the rest of the time to continue researching your topic.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)

Students should work with their partner to create the introduction for their story. They should also continue researching to make sure they have enough information for their book.

Share (5 minutes)

Gather students together to reflect on how the reading went today. Have students share out the introductions they have written. Discuss what makes each introduction good, also give tips for how to improve the introduction next week.

Lesson: 8
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books available for each topic. It would also be helpful to compile a list of good websites/youtube videos/online articles for students to use for research. Students will again be working with their same partner.

Connection: (1 minute)
Show pictures of the bodies of different cartoon characters/animals. Ask students to turn and talk about which part of the characters were shown.

Teaching Point
Good readers can use their writing plan to write an informative text about a topic.

Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)
Today we are going to work on the next piece of our informational book- body paragraph 1. Let's look at my introduction from yesterday and then look at my writing plan to see what I should add now.

Using information from the graphic organizers you created with a class, model how to use the informational writing planner and turn your notes into a full paragraph. Make sure to discuss the importance of adding evidence to each paragraph.

Student Involvement: (5 minutes)
Have students work with their reading partner and discuss what their next steps will be when beginning to write their story. After a few minutes have students share out what they are planning to write so that other students can hear their ideas.

Send off:
Today we added our first body paragraph to our book. Now you will work with your partner to add the first body paragraph to your informational book. Make sure that you re-read the introduction paragraph to make sure that the body paragraph makes sense. Also make sure to include 3 pieces of evidence to support in each paragraph.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to create body paragraph 1 of their book. When finished they should revise their introduction, or continue researching for the next paragraphs in their book.

Share (10 minutes)
Have students meet with another partner group to share the beginning of their books. Each group should think about the following questions:
1. Does this introduction hook the reader?
2. Does the first body paragraph make sense with the introduction?
3. What is one thing that you like about the book?
4. What is one suggestion you have to tell the other group?

Lesson: 9
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Pre-lesson preparation:
Before the lesson make sure to gather informational books of varying levels and topics. Books should be of high interest topics such as sharks, animals, extreme disasters, etc. Make sure that books are easily accessible for students and that there are multiple books available for each topic. It would also be helpful to compile a list of good websites/youtube videos/online articles for students to use for research. Students will again be working with their same partner.

Connection: (1 minute)
Show pictures of the bodies of different cartoon characters/animals. Ask students to turn and talk about which part of the characters were shown.

Teaching Point
Good readers can use their writing plan to write an informative text about a topic.

Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)
Today we are going to work on the next pieces of our informational book- body paragraphs 2 and 3. Let's look at my introduction and body paragraph that I have already written, and then continue on with our informational book.

Using information from the graphic organizers you created with a class, model how to use the informational writing planner and turn your notes into a full paragraph. Make sure to discuss the importance of adding evidence to each paragraph.

Student Involvement: (5 minutes)
Have students work with their reading partner and discuss what their next steps will be when beginning to write their story. After a few minutes have students share out what they are planning to write so that other students can hear their ideas.

Send off:
Today we added our second and third paragraphs to our book. Now you will work with your partner to add the second and third body paragraphs to your informational book. Make sure that you re-read the beginning of your book to make sure that the body paragraphs make sense. Also make sure to include 3 pieces of evidence to support in each paragraph.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to create body paragraph 2 and 3 of their book. When finished they should revise their introduction, or work on revising body paragraph 1.

Share (10 minutes)
Have students meet with another partner group (different group than the previous lesson) to share the beginning of their books. Each group should think about the following questions:
1. Does this introduction hook the reader?
2. Does the first body paragraph make sense with the introduction?
3. Do the body paragraphs flow together?
4. What is one suggestion you have to tell the other group?

Lesson: 10
Grade: 4
Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Standard
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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

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Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

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Connection: (1 minute)
Show the words "The End". Ask students what it means when they see these words at the end of a movie or show.

Teaching Point
Good readers can use their writing plan to add a conclusion to the end of their book.

Whole Group Teaching: (8-10 minutes)
Today we are going to work on the final piece of our informational book- the conclusion. Let's look at what we have so far in our class informational book and use our notes to help us write a good conclusion.

Using information from the graphic organizers you created with a class, model how to use the informational writing planner and turn your notes into a conclusion. Make sure to discuss the importance of summarizing information you have taught in the book.

Student Involvement: (5 minutes)
Have students work with their reading partner and discuss what conclusion they would write for the end of the class informational book. Have partners try to write more than one and then share out a few different ways the book could end.

Send off:
Today we wrote the final piece of our informational book, the conclusion. With your partner you need to re-read your informational book and decide how you would like it to end. Remember to use your informational writing planner to help you with your conclusion.

Student Practice time: (25 minutes)
Students should work with their partner to create the conclusion for their book. When finished they should revise other parts of their book as needed.

Share (10 minutes)
Have students meet with another partner group to share the beginning of their books. Each group should think about the following questions:
1. Does this introduction hook the reader?
2. Does the conclusion have a strong ending?
3. What is one thing that you like about the book?
4. What is one thing you enjoyed about writing this book?