

## Planning Commentary

In Task 1: Planning for Literacy Instruction and Assessment, you will write a commentary, responding to the prompts below. Your commentary should be **no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including the prompts**.

### 1. Central Focus

- a. Describe the central focus and purpose for the content you will teach in the learning segment.

[The central focus of the learning segment is non-fiction texts with a thematic emphasis on Caribbean animals. The purpose of the learning segment is to teach students how to gather information from non-fiction texts so they can write, draw, or dictate key details about a topic.]

- b. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address

- an essential literacy strategy
- requisite skills
- reading/writing connections

[Essential Literacy Strategy: The essential literacy strategy of the learning segment is the ability to retract information from non-fiction texts and transfer these facts to individual writing. The standards and learning objectives within the learning segment address the essential literacy strategy in three ways. First, the standards and literacy objectives require students to read and engage in non-fiction texts. Each day of the learning segment will start with a reading activity in which students will be exposed to a non-fiction text, via read alouds and online resources. Students will become familiar with non-fiction texts, which will aid in their individual mastery of the essential literacy strategy. Second, the standards and learning objectives require students to identify key details from non-fiction texts. Throughout the week students will watch the teacher as she models how to extract key details from non-fiction texts. After this model, students will have the opportunity to practice these skills independently, again aiding them in the mastery of the essential literacy strategy. Finally, the standards and learning objectives require students to write about information gathered from non-fiction texts. Each day of this learning segment, students will complete a writing assignment, that will later be assessed for mastery, to practice these skills and model their mastery of the essential literacy strategy.

Requisite Skills: In this learning segment, the main requisite skill is the ability to identify key details from non-fiction texts. This skill will lead to the process of retracting information from non-fiction texts and transferring these facts into student writing. The standards and learning objectives address this requisite skill in three ways. First, the standards and literacy objectives require students to read and engage in non-fiction texts. Each day of the learning segment will start with a reading activity in which students will be exposed to a non-fiction text, either in the form of a book and/or an online resource. Students will become familiar with non-fiction texts, in turn aiding students in the mastery of the main requisite skill. Second, the standards and learning objectives require students to recognize key details of text. Each day of the learning segment, students will see a model of how to do this as well as have the opportunity to practice this skill. Finally, the standards and learning objectives require students to retell key details of a text. Students will have seen this skill through teacher modeling and have an opportunity for independent practice in each learning segment. For example, on days one and two of the learning segment, students will participate in an interactive writing as a whole

class in which the teacher models and aids the class in whole group before students are asked to go back to their tables and work on the same writing prompt on their own.

**Reading/Writing Connections:** The standards and learning objectives within the learning segment address reading and writing connections each and every day. Each day the learning segment begins with a reading activity, in the form of a shared reading, read aloud, or exploring an online resource. During the reading activity the teacher will model how effective readers approach non-fiction texts and use the non-fiction text to acquire information about a specific topic of study, in this case, Caribbean land animals. The teacher will also explain how reading non-fiction is connected to writing non-fiction and demonstrate how readers use information from literature to inform their own writing. Students will practice reading and retracting facts from text. In addition, they will be asked to write non-fiction. For example, on day one, students will complete a graphic organizer about flamingos, using facts and information from the non-fiction texts about flamingos explored earlier in the learning segment. After these five learning segments, students will have a solid understanding of the connection between reading and writing non-fiction and be capable of completing these tasks independently.]

- i. Explain how your plans build on each other to help students **make connections** between skills and the essential strategy to comprehend **OR** compose text in meaningful contexts.

[In the first learning segment, students will read a non-fiction book about flamingos and explore an online resource that provides more facts about flamingos. Later that day, students will participate in a Interactive Writing in which students will observe, as the teacher models, how readers identify key details in non-fiction texts and use them in writing. After this whole group interactive writing, students will have the opportunity to work independently at their tables to complete the writing task about flamingos. The next learning segment is very similar in structure as students explore bats. There will be a read aloud in the morning, followed by an interactive writing and finally independent work. Each day the students will become more proficient at the essential literacy strategy as the teacher progressively models more challenging skills, ask more vigorous questions, and sets a higher standard for student work. As the learning segment progresses, students will work independently and eventually pick out key details and write non-fiction on their own. Students make connections to the essential strategy by completing graphic organizers, answering written prompts, and finding and producing key details on student handouts. To compliment student writing, I will circulate the room and prompt informal discussions in order to facilitate a vocalization of the connection between non fiction texts and student writing.]

## 2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a-b), describe what you know about **your** students with respect to the central focus of the learning segment.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

- a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—**What do students know, what can they do, and what are they learning to do?**

[At this point in the year, the majority of my students have mastered the following concepts:

- Print Concepts
  - Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page-by-page
  - Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
  - Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
  - Recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Phonological Awareness
  - Count, pronounce, blend and segment syllables in spoken word.
  - Blend and segment onset and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.
- Phonics and Word Recognition
  - Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds of each consonant.
  - Read common high-frequency words by sight.
  - Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of letters that differ.
- Craft and Structure of Non-Fiction Texts
  - With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
  - Identify the front cover, back cover and title page of a book
  - Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.
- Production and Distribution of Writing
  - With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

English Language Learners have also mastered the majority of the above listed concepts with the exception of:

- Print Concepts
  - Recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Phonological Awareness
  - Count, pronounce, blend and segment syllables in spoken word.
- Phonics and Word Recognition
  - Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of letters that differ.

Struggling Readers have also mastered the majority of the above listed concepts with the exception of:

- Phonics and Word Recognition
  - Read common high-frequency words by sight.
  - Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of letters that differ.

My two students with IEPs for articulation have also mastered the majority of the above listed concepts with the exception of:

- Phonological Awareness
  - Count, pronounce, blend and segment syllables in spoken word.
  - Blend and segment onset and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.

In these learning segments, all students will learn how to:

- Use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply

some information about the topic.

- With prompting and support, describe the main topic and retell key details of the text.]

- b. Personal/cultural/community assets related to the central focus—**What do you know about your students' everyday experiences, cultural backgrounds and practices, and interests?**

[Everyday Experiences: I know that my students are sent home everyday with a leveled text that is almost always fiction at its most basic level. I can deduce that my students will not read as much non-fiction at home as they will fiction. This being the case, I will be sure to supply non-fiction texts in easily accessible places throughout the room so that students can explore these types of books during centers and any time they finish their work early. I will also encourage students to check out non fiction books from the library during our weekly scheduled check out time. This will encourage interest and a ultimately a better understanding of non-fiction texts in general.

Cultural Backgrounds and Practices: There are 24 students in my class: 11 Hispanic, 8 Caucasian, 3 African American and 2 identified as other. Each student has lived in the United States for the majority of their life so they are familiar with the culture and practices most often recognized in the United States. However, there are numerous students that were born in other countries and like to share about their heritage, customs and practices. These backgrounds can be expanded on during this lesson because many of the animals that are found in the Caribbean are also found in the countries in which these students were born. This being said, I will give these and any other students the opportunity to make these connections and share information with the rest of the class during these learning segments.

Interests: I know that my students are very interested in all animals and therefore there should be great interest in this unit of study because animals are the focus of all of our reading and writing. However, many students would not have had the opportunity to see many of these animals before and therefore may have misconceptions about these animals that are contradictory to the text. It is important to monitor these misconceptions and address them in order to better serve students in their learning of a new topic. Some students have also showed an interest in non fiction books in general because it is easier to grasp what they are learning and can vocalize what they have learned after the reading.]

### 3. Supporting Students' Literacy Learning

Respond to prompts 3a-c below. To support your explanations, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Task 1. In addition, **use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations.**

- a. Explain how your understanding of your students' prior academic learning and personal/cultural/community assets (from prompts 2a-b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials.

[With my experiences with the students in my classroom, I know that they have practiced reading and writing separately but have not had a lot of practice transferring what they learn in non fiction texts directly to their writing. Due to this knowledge, I have incorporated

interactive writings at the beginning of the week so that I can better model what this process should look like as well as give students an opportunity to practice all together before being expected to complete a difficult task on their own. This interactive writing will also help students better understand conventions of writing as well as practice strategies used to sound out unknown words. The activities that correspond with each of these learning segments was designed in order to better differentiate across grade level as well as among struggling readers, English language learners and students with IEPs. I decided to use PebbleGo as a resource because it is something that my students are familiar with and understand the expectations of using this online resource. Along with the familiarity that PebbleGo lends, it is also a great example of a different type of non-fiction text with accurate and informative details. I have incorporated a lot of group discussion within these learning segments because discussion allows students to “extend their thinking ... as they work to clarify and interpret text” (Flint, 276). This justification for discussion time also lends itself to feedback and clarification discussion held between individual students and the teacher. Discussion inevitably aids the English language learners in my class as it is of paramount importance for these students to “share with their peers their responses” to probing questions in order to gain a better understanding of the conventions of the English language as well as providing practice of vocalization (xu, 150). Throughout the lesson, there will be time set aside, mostly during read alouds and interactive writings for students to ask questions. It is important for all students in my classroom, but in particular, English language learners, struggling readers and those with IEPs, to be able to ask clarifying questions or voice inquiry. “In teaching multiculturally, it is essential to start with what matters to children (Souto-Manning, 54). “Inquiry is multicultural because it transforms the curriculum in ways that address both personal and culturally relevant teaching as well as rigorous educational opportunities” that all students could benefit from (Souto-Manning, 41).]

- b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for **the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs.**

[By incorporating interactive writings at the beginning of the series of learning segments, I support the class as a whole that models writing about non fiction texts and the facts that can be extracted from such texts. These interactive writings also provide all students practice completing the central focus of these learning segments before they are asked to do so on their own and be assessed on such work. The incorporation of the online resource, PebbleGo, students can witness one to one correspondence with words in the text and what is being read by the program. This along with the read aloud conducted by the teacher allows students to see proper conventions in reading that transfer to their own writing. I chose to pause throughout the read aloud and ask probing questions in order to check for understanding amongst all students as well as a behavioral management technique. Due to the fact that this class is a combination classroom with kindergarteners and first graders, along with English language learners and students with IEPs, there are varying degrees of abilities and therefore differentiation is essential. Some students have not developed the motor skills necessary to write between lines on a paper and some struggle with the spacing of their writing. This being a factor for a number of students, scaffolding worksheets have been provided in this lesson that allow students to write and/or draw without such limiting restrictions. One student, Sandra, with an IEP has difficulty with articulation and putting words in an order that makes sense. This will effect her participation and will necessitate the teacher aiding her in translating her thoughts to paper both in whole group discussions and in individual writing. Another student, Vince, with an IEP for

articulation will not need as much aid in completing these tasks and mostly works with the speech pathologist outside of the classroom. The activities following each learning segment give first graders and those performing above grade level, to write more and practice writing conventions used in complete sentences. At the same time, there are opportunities for students who are striving to reach grade level, to draw and/or list factual information learned from these non-fiction texts. Each of these activities also emphasizes that the facts in the writing in these activities are found in a specific non-fiction text. For example, the worksheet for flamingos states “In the non-fiction book: Flamingos I learned that ...” followed by a tree chart where students write what flamingos have, what they can do and what they are. This explicitly makes a connection between reading and writing that is paramount in achieving the central focus and learning objectives. By understanding what my students know, I am aware that some students need this connection to be more explicit than others and therefore, this prompt provides that support for specific students in my classroom.]

Consider students with IEPs, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

- c. Describe common misconceptions or common developmental approximations within your literacy central focus and how you will address them.

[A common misconception related to the central focus of the learning segment is that fiction is a story and non-fiction is information. I want students to have a broader understanding of non-fiction texts. There are many types of non-fiction texts: persuasive, procedural, expository and narrative. These learning segments focus mainly on expository books and writing but it is important to expose students to other types of non-fiction. At the beginning of the unit, I will explain this idea to students and give examples from our book boxes of non-fiction texts. I hope to explore these other types of non-fiction texts through read alouds at the end of the day so that students who may struggle with reading independently still have the experience of exploring these varying non-fiction texts. Other misunderstandings surrounding the central focus is that non-fiction writing is simply copying directly from non-fiction readings. This directly relates to the difference in non-fiction texts. In order to combat this misconception, I will use Monday’s morning work as an example of non-fiction writing that is not directly linked to a non-fiction text. On Monday mornings, students are asked to write and draw about something that happened over their weekend and then share these during morning meeting. After students have an opportunity to draw, write and share, I will explain that these writings are also considered non-fiction, narratives.]

#### 4. Supporting Literacy Development Through Language

- Describe the instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) that help students understand and successfully use the language function and additional language demands identified in prompts 4a-c.

[The ability to retell is an essential language function in order for students to learn the literacy strategy within this central focus. Students should be able to take facts and information from non-fiction texts and retell them via writing and class discussion throughout these learning segments. Students will have proven mastery of this learning target if they can accurately retell factual information from the text in their writing.]

- b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[Students will have the opportunity to use the language function identified above in every learning segment of these plans. On day one, students will have the opportunity to retell information about flamingos from non-fiction texts to their “can/have/are” graphic organizer. On day two, students will have the opportunity to retell information about bats from non-fiction texts by writing what they have learned after a PebbleGo investigation and read aloud. On day three, students will have the opportunity to retell factual information about toucans from non-fiction texts as they complete a flow chart that asks students to retell descriptive information about toucans. On day four, students will have the opportunity to retell factual information about tapirs after a PebbleGo investigation via a worksheet that asks about tapirs’ habitats, food, body and life cycle. On day five, students will have the opportunity to retell factual information about Iguanas by identifying the non-fiction text they read and describing an iguana’s diet, habitat and other fun facts.]

- c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use.

- Vocabulary or key phrases
- **Plus** at least one of the following language demands:
  - Syntax
  - Discourse

[Vocabulary or Key Phrases: Students need to understand key academic language used throughout the lesson, including words such as; describe, list, brainstorm, facts, discuss, evidence, think-pair-share, and strategies. Students will see and hear this vocabulary during instructional time in each learning segment as well as any modeling the teacher conducts. Students may be familiar with some of these words but may need more support and modeling for others. Students have worked on brainstorming, listing, describing, discussing and brainstorming in the past, however, there has not been much practice of think-pair-share, discussing strategies or providing evidence at this point in the year. Students will learn throughout the learning segments what a fact is. Students will be asked to re-state facts from non-fiction texts and write facts for assessment. On the first day of the unit, I will define fact and model how to pull facts from non-fiction texts and write facts. Along with the academic vocabulary used, there is a lot of key vocabulary related to each animal in the unit, listed in each learning segment’s lesson plan. Students will be expected to use the vocabulary in their written tasks at the end of each class period. Before each writing assignment, I will model how to use key vocabulary in writing. In addition, we will make a class list of new vocabulary words learned in our non-fiction unit for references, which will be displayed beside the word wall.

Discourse: Students will learn how to talk about non-fiction over the course of the learning segments. Every day, students will have the opportunity to talk about non-fiction as a class, in small groups and one-on-one with the teacher. The class’ discussions of non-fiction texts will take place, for the most part, as a whole group during read alouds and interactive writings. I will present a question to the class and call on different students to answer. Students will talk about non-fiction in small groups during think-pair-share and other similar small group talk at tables throughout the day. Finally, students will discuss non-fiction during feedback and probing questions between an individual student and the teacher. This is achieved by circulating the room during independent writing time and asking questions such as; “what did you learn from the non-fiction book we read? How did you know this fact about this animal? Where did you learn this fact about this animal?”]

Consider the range of students’ understandings of the language function and other

language demands—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

**d. Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.

[Students will start their non-fiction unit on Caribbean animals one week before these learning segments begin. Over the course of five days, students will be introduced to the language function and demands through read alouds, class discussions and formal instruction. During the learning segment, I will provide instructional supports on a daily basis to ensure that students understand and successfully use the language function and language demands of the unit. For example, when I model how to pull key details from a non-fiction text I will use words such as “facts”, “retell” and “describe” to familiarize students with this terminology. I will also encourage students to use similar vocabulary during their small group discussions and independently as I walk around the room, monitoring student progress.]

## 5. Monitoring Student Learning

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Task 1.

- a. Describe how your planned formal and informal assessments will provide direct evidence that students can use the literacy strategy and requisite skills to comprehend or compose text throughout the learning segment.

[My planned informal assessments will effectively provide evidence that students can gain information from non-fiction texts to inform their individual writing. Every class period I will ask students to perform a task that will display their knowledge of non-fiction texts. During numerous learning segments, students are expected to do some sort of motion whenever they hear a fact from the non-fiction texts. As I read, I will look around to see which students can accurately make this motion when facts are discussed in the reading. This daily informal assessment will provide direct evidence of students' comprehension of the literacy strategy by effectively revealing which students can retract facts from non-fiction texts and which students need more support. Another way I informally assess students is by having a one-on-one or small group discussion about non-fiction texts, asking probing questions and taking note of student responses. This strategy is also used when students are taking part in a think-pair-share as I circulate the carpet and listen in on some of the conversations between students. This type of informal assessment will provide direct evidence of students' comprehension of the literacy strategy by revealing which students can retract and dictate facts from non-fiction texts and which students are having trouble completing the task.

Throughout the unit I will formally assess students by collecting their writing each day. Each writing task was designed to show whether or not students are able to retract facts from non-fiction and display them using pictures or words. I will use a standard rubric to evaluate this writing. After grading each students' writing, I will have conduct a few follow up conversations during some free time throughout the day to clear up any misconceptions or ask clarifying questions. I hope to give individual, verbal, feedback to each student at least once in the span of these five learning segments. Overall, these assessments will show understandings and/or misunderstandings of the central focus of these learning segments.]

- b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

Consider all students, including students with IEPs, English language learners,

struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

[For students struggling with this lesson, especially those with IEPs, a separate worksheet will be provided in which they can draw what they have learned about a specific animal instead of write the facts. Dictation by the TA is also an option for students who need the additional support. However, all students will be given the original graphic organizer to begin. Students who need these adaptations will mainly be assessed by the completion of the activity and through personal discussions and feedback with the teacher. English language learners will be assessed based on the fact that they can discuss factual information within a group context and/or on an individual basis. English language learners should have the focus of retelling factual information and less on the conventions and syntax. This will be assessed by looking at their worksheets and graphic organizers as well as personal conversation and their answers to probing questions throughout the learning segments. Students performing above grade level and/or gifted students, will be expected to write in sentence form with the appropriate syntax and conventions demonstrated in the majority of their work. The assessment and feedback of these gifted students will also take into account whether or not they completed extension activities along with the quality of their work that has come to be expected of them throughout the year. Struggling readers will be assessed by the rubric, found in the lesson plan, but will have the opportunity to discuss comprehension of the non-fiction texts with the teacher during one or more of the learning segments.]

## **Resources**

- Flint, A. S. (2008). *Literate lives: Teaching reading & writing in elementary classrooms*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Souto-Manning, M. (2013). *Multicultural teaching in the early childhood classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Pres.
- Xu, S. H. (2010). *Teaching English language learners: Literacy strategies and resources for K-6*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

## Instruction Commentary

In Task 2: Instructing and Engaging Students in Literacy Learning, you will write a commentary, responding to the prompts below. Your commentary should be **no more than 6 single-spaced pages, including the prompts.**

1. Which lesson or lessons are shown in the video clips? Identify the lesson(s) by lesson plan number.

[The first video clip is from lesson 2 in the learning segment. The second video clip is from lesson 3 in the learning segment.]

2. **Promoting a Positive Learning Environment**

In response to the prompt, refer to scenes in the video clips where you provided a positive learning environment.

- How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, **and** challenge students to engage in learning?

[Before asking students to relay a question they had about bats to me, I asked them to turn and talk to a partner about some wonderings they had from their morning work. This was done in the hopes that students would feel confident in the group setting and be able to add to the group discussion without feeling as though they were put on the spot. In the whole group setting, every student had the opportunity to think of and explain a wondering they had about bats. When called on, I attempted to revoice and retell their question in the hopes to clarify misunderstandings or inaudibility. I conducted each lesson with a friendly demeanor and even supplied students with comical demonstrations to demonstrate rapport with my students. Each student's response was validated with either an answer or by writing it on our chart paper demonstrating responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds. Engagement in a kindergarten and first grade classroom can be difficult to achieve one hundred percent of the lesson but I varied the monotony of simply writing questions on the board with an interactive conversation with students about the subject at hand. Throughout the learning segments and in these clips, I ask for whole class participation as well as engagement by asking them their opinions about the wonderings other students posed by asking for a thumbs up or a thumbs down in response to these questions. At one point during these video clips a student wonders if bats are cool, an opinion question and instead of not adding that to the list I simply explained that that was an opinion but that after learning about bats in our non fiction texts, some people might have different answers to that question because it was an opinion question. I also challenged students to use scientific terms and prior vocabulary we learned in previous learning segments during the whole class discussion. At one point a student wonders if bats have enemies. I ask students to think of the scientific term that means enemies that hunt and give clues that it starts with the letter "p". After one student answers prey I then clarify the difference between predator and prey and ask again what the term is of animals that hunt the prey. After one student answers using the word predator, I explain that in the question written on the "We Wonder" chart, the word enemies could be replaced with predators in order to reinforce the use of scientific terminology while learning about these Caribbean animals. During the PebbleGo part of the whole group discussion, I attempted to provide examples that challenged students to think comparatively about bats and other mammals. I also challenged students to use their prior knowledge of maps, from a previous unit, to describe a bat's **habitat and range**. In the clip that focused on individual student work, I challenged students to connect the central idea to their individual writing and

the resources we used in class to learn about these animals. I asked students to think about where they learned the information they were writing and what types of books would aid them in learning and writing about these animals. During these clips as well as throughout the entire learning segment, I demonstrated mutual respect for students by having as many individual conversations during student work time, aiding students when necessary as well as challenging those who needed to be pushed further. Throughout the learning segment, students had the opportunity to engage with other students in the form of a turn and talk forum as well as calling on other students to aid in the answering of difficult questions.]

### 3. Engaging Students in Learning

Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

- a. Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.

[During the whole group sections of these learning segments, I asked probing questions that were centered around comprehension as well as the central focus of this learning segment, understanding how to gather information from non-fiction texts so students are able to write, draw or dictate key details about a topic. In order to create a discussion about our central focus, I asked students to look back at the list we created as a class and determine if they could answer any questions from that list from the non fiction reading on PebbleGo. This was a challenge for students and therefore I replayed the section of the online book that discussed where bats sleep in order for students to be able to answer the questions the class asked about bats' sleeping habits. Throughout the learning segment students were asked to complete a movement when they heard a fact about a specific animal, dependent on the lesson, while reading a non-fiction book. After each read-a-loud students were asked to share at least one fact that they learned from the non-fiction text. If the group as a whole was having difficulty listing facts about that particular animal, I gave students the opportunity to turn and talk to a partner about what they learned from the non-fiction text. After using this strategy, almost all students were able to name at least one fact that they learned about that animal from a non-fiction text. During the first video clip, while students are coming up with their "wonderings" about bats, I ask probing questions such as: "what kinds of books would we read in order to find this information?" At some points during the earlier parts of the learning segment, students needed more aid in answering this question so I followed up with asking if we would read fiction or non-fiction texts in order to answer these questions or wonderings. Later on in the learning segment, students were able to answer the first question without the follow up question. As I went around helping students during the learning segment, much like in the second film clip, I asked similar probing questions in order to informally assess student understandings of non-fiction texts and any misconceptions that still may exist. During whole class discussion I actively engaged students in gauging their understanding of key concepts as well as instructions by asking students to give me a thumbs up or a thumbs down throughout the lesson. I asked targeted questions to students with articulation needs and IEPs, as well as those students performing above grade level, throughout whole class discussion as well as on an individual basis. Throughout each lesson of the learning segment I utilized pictures, demonstrations and hand gestures to ensure that my ELL's were actively engaged and participating in the class discussion. While introducing new

vocabulary in each lesson of the learning segment, I provided support by checking for understanding of these words during whole class discussion and during individual work time. During interactive writing portions of the learning segments I modeled using methods discussed prior to each lesson in order to stretch out the spelling of unknown words. Students will also be expected to write in complete sentences, a requisite skill that we have been working on throughout the semester. Students were engaged in learning and understanding what a complete sentence would look like while I model the assessment and/or class activity for each particular lesson.]

- b. Describe how your instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

[Students' prior academic learning was linked to instruction by reviewing and modeling requisite skills such as stretching out unknown words and proper capitalization and punctuation when writing in full sentences as I modeled each class activity and/or assessment and by asking probing questions during interactive writings. During the first video clip I activate prior knowledge by asking about scientific vocabulary that has been covered prior to this lesson, including prey and predators, in the hopes that students can relate their prior knowledge of what those terms are to the Caribbean animals we learned about in this learning segment. As each lesson in this learning segment built upon one another, students were asked to activate prior knowledge in the form of a review of the day before as well as in the form of comparing the animals from previous days to the current animal being taught. Throughout my instruction during this learning segment, I ask students about their experiences with each of the animals, for example; "have you ever seen a bat? iguana? flamingo? etc., as well as connecting the lesson to many of my student's place of origin. Since this is a unit of study that focuses on non-fiction texts about Caribbean animals, we studied what the Caribbean was and where it was located prior to this learning segment. I knew that many of my students were from Mexico as well as some areas in the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. I was able to connect their cultural background to the content at hand as they were asked to find those countries in the Caribbean and attest to some of the animals they might have seen growing up. Many of the first graders in my class had gone to the zoo as a kindergartener and therefore were able to link the knowledge of the animals they learned about at the zoo to this learning segment as many of these animals overlapped.]

#### 4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction

Refer to examples from the video clips in your explanations.

- a. Explain how you elicited and built on student responses to promote thinking and apply the literacy strategy using requisite skills to comprehend or compose text.

[As students added questions to the "We Wonder" chart, I asked follow up questions that were intended to have the students think on a deeper level. These questions ranged from comparing different animals to directly applying the literacy strategy of using non-fiction texts to inform student writing. Throughout these video clips, during both whole class discussion and individual work time, students were asked whether these facts were learned in a non-fiction or fiction text. Students were also prompted to think about the way in which they learn new information. Numerous times

throughout the learning segment as well as in these video clips, I asked students how they knew specific information about that particular animal. Some responded by referring back to the non-fiction text, electronic or hard copy, while others often referred to prior knowledge or their own individual research on that particular animal. As students responded to the prompt of “what do we wonder about bats?” I asked follow up questions, revoiced and asked for feedback from the rest of the class. When one student wonders about the way in which bats sleep, I then engaged the class in a thumbs up/thumbs down polling question that asked them to predict or use prior knowledge to determine their thoughts on whether or not bats slept upside down. Students who answered questions during the PebbleGo part of the whole class instruction, were asked follow up or clarifying questions in order to solidify their answers for the rest of their classmates.]

- b. Explain how you modeled the literacy strategy and supported students as they practiced and applied the literacy strategy in a meaning-based context.

[Throughout the learning segment, numerous interactive writings were conducted in which I shared the pen with students in order to model the literacy strategy of composing student writing from information learned from non-fiction texts. In these film clips, I modeled asking questions about the way in which we learn this information by asking students how they knew certain facts about specific animals as well as what types of books helped students learn and understand this information. Throughout the learning segment, I modeled each class activity and/or assessment on the board before asking students to complete it on their own. This modeling gave students the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the essential literacy strategy, directions or requisite skills they were expected to use. While students were doing individual work, much like in the second film clip, I asked students how they practiced and applied the essential learning strategy of identifying and writing about non fiction texts. Many of these questions can be heard in the second film clip, such as; “How did you know that?, What kinds of books would help us learn that?, What kind of book do you think we read today? If you didn’t know that, how could you figure it out? Do you remember what \_\_\_\_ part of the \_\_\_\_ this is?, etc”. These questions aided students in recognizing the essential literacy strategy as well as supported student learning and application of that strategy.]

## 5. Analyzing Teaching

Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

- a. What changes would you make to your instruction—for the whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—to better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)?

[For students who needed a challenge, in order to differentiate between non-fiction and fiction texts I would incorporate one fiction read-a-loud into my learning segment so that students could compare the information gathered from a non-fiction text versus the main purpose of a fiction text, to entertain or tell a story. I think that this strategy would challenge students to differentiate between two different types of tasks as well as be able to better understand the differences between these two types of texts. For the most part, students were able to dictate, draw or write key facts from non-fiction texts because those were the only types of texts that we read, however I am unsure that if students had the opportunity to read a fiction

text about the same animal that the non-fiction text focused on they would be able to pull facts from the non-fiction text and label them as true facts as opposed to the story from the fiction text. For all students, I would like to incorporate numerous types of non-fiction texts to show that these texts do not need to just be in a book format. I did incorporate an electronic resource, PebbleGo, however I would have liked to incorporate encyclopedia's, photographs, powerpoint presentations, etc. in order to show all the forms that non-fiction texts can take. I also would like to publish student work into our own classroom non-fiction books so that students were able to see that they themselves can write non-fiction texts from learned facts, just as the authors of the non-fiction books that we read did. For struggling readers, underperforming students, and ELL's I think it would have been helpful to have students generate a key words/ vocabulary list in order to aid students who struggle to sound words out, especially considering the fact that I could not get around to everyone during individual work time to have a one on one conversation about stretching out words. Students would choose the words that they consider key vocabulary and then, sharing the pen with students, the list would be generated on chart paper and displayed at the front of the classroom on the board. This being said, if such a list were created, a conversation about challenging yourself and not simply copying off the key words list would need to happen so that students who do not need the list would challenge themselves to not use it and sound out more difficult words. ]

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/ support, such as students with IEPs, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

- b. Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning and principles from theory and/or research.

[According to Amy Seely Fling, in her book Literature Lives when discussing struggling readers, "the use of multiple texts, as opposed to a single textbook, fosters students' interests. Using analogies between unfamiliar and familiar concepts aids students' learning" (Flint, 356). "Struggling readers may be able to effectively decode words and read with some fluency, but are unable to retell what was read or comprehend with any degree of success". By creating a key vocabulary chart, surrounding a high interest text with moderate to difficult text level, teachers should use "moderate scaffolding" in which they "review prior knowledge to identify incorrect information, vocabulary instruction, text structure support, guiding reading strategies with increased text difficulty" to support struggling readers. (Flint, 365). ]

## **References**

Flint, A. S. (2008). *Literate lives: Teaching reading & writing in elementary classrooms*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

## Literacy Assessment Commentary

In Task 3: Assessing Students' Literacy Learning, you will write a commentary, responding to the prompts below. Your commentary should be **no more than 10 single-spaced pages, including the prompts.**

### 1. Analyzing Student Learning

- a. Identify the specific standards/objectives measured by the assessment you chose for analysis.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.2 With prompting and support, describe the main topic and retell key details of a text.]

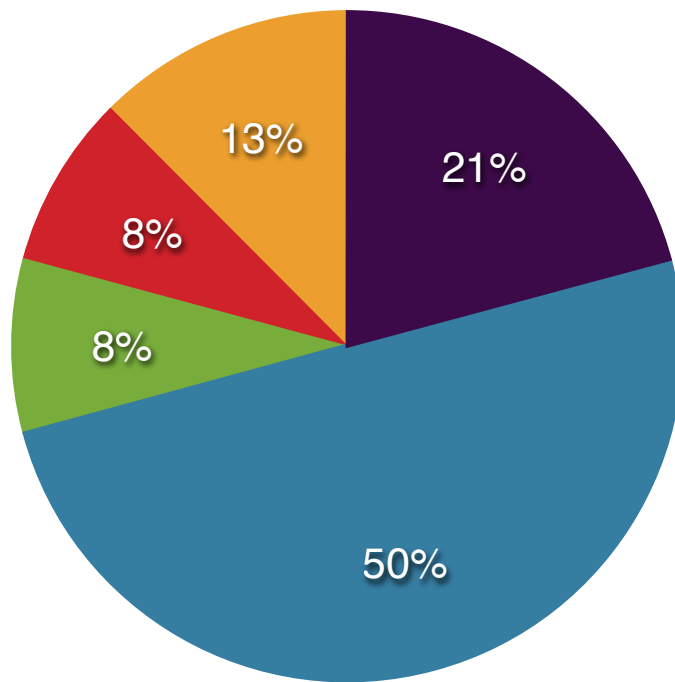
- b. Provide the evaluation criteria you used to analyze student learning.

	4 (Mastery)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Developing)	1 (Beginning)
Accuracy	Produces three accurate facts about iguanas in the corresponding section (habitat, food, fun facts). Uses complete sentences.	Produces 2-3 accurate facts about iguanas in the corresponding section.	Produces two accurate facts about iguanas.	Produces less than two accurate facts about iguanas.
Strategies*	Consistently uses efficient and effective strategies to recall information from the text.	Typically uses effective strategies to recall information from the text.	Rarely uses effective strategies to recall information from the text.	Does not use effective strategies to recall information from the text.

\*Note: Examples of effective strategies would include looking back at the text for factual evidence, remembering key details from the text, and recalling class discussions.]

- c. Provide a graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes student learning for your whole class. Be sure to summarize student learning for all evaluation criteria described above.

● Mastery      ● Proficient      ● Developing      ● Beginning  
 ● Absent/Incomplete



- d. Use evidence found in the **3 student work samples and the whole class summary** to analyze the patterns of learning for the whole class and differences for groups or individual learners relative to
- the essential literacy strategy and
  - requisite skills

Consider what students understand and do well, and where they continue to struggle (e.g., common errors, confusions, need for greater challenge).

[Due to the fact that this is a kindergarten-first grade combination class, I expected more of a spread of understanding of the essential literacy strategy and requisite skills, however, almost 3/4 of the class was at least proficient in understanding and demonstrating knowledge of both the essential literacy strategy and requisite skills. Students who fell in the category of developing, along with Student 3 from the work samples, struggled with determining where the facts they learned from the non-fiction reading should be placed in the graphic organizer. Some of the assessment differences pertaining to this misunderstanding include duplicating facts in multiple categories of the graphic organizer, as Student 3 did. Misunderstandings of this nature also include writing about an iguana's habitat in the category labeled food or fun facts on the graphic organizer. All of the students who completed the assignment were able to name one fact about iguanas from the non-fiction reading. Students who fell into the category of beginning included students classified as struggling readers and ELLs. Although students were not expected to read this non-fiction text individually, struggling readers are often

also struggling writers, according to Amy Seely Flint in Literature Lives. These two students were able to copy the title off of the board and both attempted to sound out and stretch out words while completing the graphic organizer. Even after modeling, these two students were unable to correctly identify what the prompts were asking of the student in the graphic organizer and therefore struggled to complete the graphic organizer. Throughout this assessment, these two students struggled with the requisite skills required to successfully complete the graphic organizer along with recalling key details from the non-fiction text in order to write, dictate or draw to compose explanatory texts in which they supply information about iguanas. Other ELLs in my class are able to hear and identify sounds of all the letters, making them more successful in stretching out words and inventive spelling. These two students are kindergarteners who are struggling with connecting letter sounds to the letters and therefore have a very difficult accomplishing the use of these requisite skills of stretching out words and/or inventive spelling. Students who are in the developing category, including Student 2, have yet to demonstrate the use of complete sentences, a requisite skill required in this assessment. This might include, not using proper punctuation as well as writing one word in each box instead of a full sentence. Over half of the class mastered the essential literacy strategy, however, only approximately 30% of those students used the requisite skills required to do so. While those categorized as proficient mastered the essential literacy strategy, they were not considered mastery of this assessment because they were lacking the requisite skills previously discussed. Those classified in the developing or beginning stage lacked, in some way, in both the essential literacy strategy as well as requisite skills. ]

## 2. Feedback to Guide Further Learning

Refer to specific evidence of submitted feedback to support your explanations.

- a. In what form did you submit your evidence of feedback for the 3 focus students?
  - Written directly on work samples or in a separate document
  - In audio files
  - In video clips from the instruction task (provide a time-stamp reference) or in a separate video clip

[Evidence of written feedback was written directly on work samples.]

- b. Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to the standards/objectives measured.

[The feedback for Student 1 addressed his or her successes in writing about what he or she learned from the non fiction texts, the essential literacy strategy based on the above standards, as well as his or her ability to write in complete sentences using periods, requisite skills required to be considered for the mastery level of this assessment.

The feedback for Student 2 addressed the successful completion of writing about what he or she learned about iguanas from non-fiction texts, the essential literacy strategy based on the above standards. The feedback also highlights the need to use complete sentences, a requisite skill required to be considered for the mastery level of this assessment. Finally, we have been learning about digraphs in writing and therefore,

the last piece of feedback addressed her spelling of words where digraphs are used. This student is a first grader and therefore is expected to challenge himself or herself in the area of spelling, moving away from the inventive spelling when introduced to other spelling techniques.

The feedback for Student 3 addressed his or her strength in listening for key details and facts from a non-fiction reading while highlighting the need to take these learned facts and transfer these to his or her individual writing. Stretching out words, a requisite skill, was also mentioned in his or her feedback as a need that the student should work on when writing. The last piece of feedback on Student 3's graphic organizer was directed towards writing multiple different facts versus repeating a fact about iguanas eating fruit.]

- c. Describe how you will support students to apply the feedback to guide improvement, either within the learning segment or at a later time.

[In order to support students to apply feedback, we will conduct a review of the requisite skills required in this learning segment including the use of complete sentences, proper punctuation and stretching out words in order to hear each letter sound when attempting to spell words. I will break up students into small groups, that will roughly correspond with the divisions made by the assessment evaluation criteria and work with each small group during morning work time or quiet reading in order to monitor student progress as well as improvement of identified feedback skill. Students that fell into the mastery or proficient category, much like Student 1, will be challenged to write consecutive sentences that pertain to the same subject, attempting to make paragraphs. Although there is no testing for AIG in kindergarten, there are students in my class that would be classified as gifted and/or talented, like Student 1, who need this extra challenge in order to stay engaged and progress as learners. Students who fell into the category of developing and beginning categories will be further analyzed during future works and assessments in order to break these students up by the focus requisite skill needed by individual students. Students who struggled with writing in complete sentences but have a better grasp on stretching out words, much like Student 2, will be challenged to take a one word answer and turn them into a complete sentences. This challenge could take the form of the same graphic organizer or extra practice for morning work where students have sentences with words missing in which students need to determine what part of speech is needed to complete that particular sentence, similar to mad libs. I would work one on one with students who fell into the beginning category, including ELLs who struggle with phonemes and minimal pairs, much like Student 3, in the morning or during quiet reading time, going through each phoneme and matching the letter to the sounds. As this progresses, move on to minimal pairs and demonstrate how phonemes and minimal pairs change the meaning of the words as well as the spelling. Inventive spelling is still expected at this stage, however, students struggling with this requisite skill need to first understand the sounds each letter makes before being expected to spell words, even using the inventive spelling method. My two students with IEPs for articulation will also benefit greatly from this added practice in pronunciation of phonemes, blends and digraphs and will be included in the "beginning and ELL" small group.]

### 3. Evidence of Language Understanding and Use

You may provide evidence of students' language use **from ONE, TWO OR ALL THREE of the following sources:**

1. Use video clips from Task 2 and provide time-stamp references for language use.

2. Submit an additional video file named "Language Use" of no more than 5 minutes in length and provide time-stamp references for student language use (this can be footage of one or more students' language use). Submit the clip in Task 3 Part B.
3. Use the student work samples analyzed in Task 3 and cite language use.

When responding to the prompt below, use concrete examples from the video clips (using time-stamp references) and/or student work samples as evidence. Evidence from the clips may focus on one or more students.

- Explain and provide evidence for the extent to which your students were able to use or struggled to use language (selected function, vocabulary, and additional identified language demands from Task 1) to develop content understandings.

[Throughout the learning segment, students were able to use the vocabulary learned from non-fiction texts as well as from previous lessons in order to deepen their understanding as well as relay information verbally and through their writing. Students demonstrated evidence of mastery of this vocabulary in the video clips from Task 2 as well as in the language used in student work samples. During the whole group discussion part of the video clips students used scientific and academic language to describe predators and prey. At 2:25 minute one student adds a question to the "we wonder" chart that states: "do bats have enemies?". I ask a follow up questions to prompt the use of such language and around the 2:58 minute mark, one student arrives at the word predator to be interchangeable with enemy, in this case. This type of language use did take some prompting and explanation but students would later use these terms when describing other Caribbean animals in this learning segment with little to no prompting. Around the 6:00 minute mark, students use the word mammals to describe what type of animal "we", humans, are. This key vocabulary is also used in comparison when discussion animals such as flamingos and parrots which are birds and iguanas which are reptiles.

Throughout the second video clip, students use key vocabulary when completing individual work, such as non-fiction, when prompted to think about how and where they learned new information. Around the 11:20 minute mark, one student, after prompting, answers that he learned his written facts about parrots from a non-fiction book that was also an online resource instead of a traditional book. At the 12:22 mark, one student uses key vocabulary specific to the parrot, feathers, and after prompting, compares feathers to fur. Soon after, around 12:45, one student begins to compare parrots to mammals and recognizes that parrots are not mammals and wonders what their scientific classification is, if it can't be mammals. Around the 13:43 minute mark, one student uses the vocabulary word, beak, specific to the parrot lesson, and goes on to describe the beaks use and why it needs to be strong because of what parrots eat, nuts.

Language use can also be seen in student work samples. In Student 1's work sample, he or she uses language such as reptiles, plants and desert, all key vocabulary used in the iguana lesson. By writing in complete sentences, Student 1 describes the language used in the graphic organizer to explain her comprehension of those words, habitat, food, and fun facts. Student 1 clearly understands what the word habitat means by stating in that box, "Iguanas liv in the desrt." The same can be said about food and fun facts as he or she fills those boxes with "Iguanas eat plats." and "Iguanas are reptiels." respectively. Although Student 2 does not write in complete sentences, it is clear that he or she understands the meaning of each category on the graphic organizer based on his or her responses. Student 3 also refers to key vocabulary and language, desert, when describing the habitat of the iguana.

Although there were many great examples of students using language throughout the

learning segment, prompting during the first few lessons was necessary in order to push students to use this type of language. Towards the end of the learning segment, students, for the most part, were using this language successfully without prompting. Some English language learners struggled with new vocabulary surrounding each specific animal but were successful in identifying what types of texts students should use in order to gain factual knowledge surrounding a specific topic. Throughout the learning segment, students demonstrated understanding of academic language by performing the given task when asked using academic language such as “brainstorm, describe, discuss, evidence, list, facts, think-pair-share, etc.”]

#### 4. Using Assessment to Inform Instruction

- a. Based on your analysis of student learning presented in prompts 1c-d, describe next steps for instruction

- for the whole class
- for the 3 focus students and other individuals/groups with specific needs  
Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students needing greater support or challenge).

[In order to push the students who were assessed at a proficient, developing or beginning level, requisite skills such as writing in complete sentences and stretching out words will be practiced on a daily basis throughout the day during literacy time. Students who struggled with writing in complete sentences but have a better grasp on stretching out words, much like Student 2, will be challenged to take a one word answer and turn them into a complete sentences. This challenge could take the form of the same graphic organizer or extra practice for morning work where students have sentences with words missing in which students need to determine what part of speech is needed to complete that particular sentence, similar to mad libs. Students assessed at the beginning level, along with ELLs who are still struggling with phonological awareness, will also be assigned a small group that meets once a day in order to strengthen phonological requisite skills, as described above. To challenge students who have already mastered the essential literacy strategy along with requisite skills focused on during this lesson, such as Student 1, they will be challenged to combine their sentences from solitary sentences to a paragraph about each animal covered in this learning segment.

After analyzing the assessments, the two students with IEPs for articulation did not struggle with this assignment, both fell into the proficient category of understanding. After discussing these two students with my CT when completing the context for learning, it was expected that these students would not struggle with the types of literacy instruction that I planned on introducing during this learning segment. In order to aid their progress with articulation, I will continue to frame questions with sentence starters and if they respond with one word answers, push them to answer in complete sentences.

During targeted guided reading for struggling readers, students with IEPs for articulation and English language learners, I will incorporate non-fiction texts in order to facilitate discussions surrounding non-fiction texts and writing based on non-fiction texts. Students such as Student 3, from the work samples, would be included in these targeted guided reading groups.

My next steps for the whole class include a continued study in non-fiction texts, a review of non-fiction texts, in different forms, including traditional and electronic books, powerpoint presentations, pictures, etc. as well as a culminating project to solidify student learning. As a culminating project at the end of this unit, students will be asked to create a mask depicting one of the 5 animals discussed in this learning segment. Students will use non-fiction resources in order to complete the masks in the most accurate fashion. Students will later be asked to write about the defining features of their chosen animal and where they learned about these features, non-fiction texts. After a “Carnival” celebration where students will wear their masks and celebrate Caribbean culture, the masks along with student writing about their masks as it relates to the animal will be hung in the hallways to display student work.]

- b. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of student learning. Support your explanation with principles from research and/or theory.

[Extending a non-fiction unit so that my students are more exposed to non-fiction texts is important to my classroom learning environment in order to further my students learning. According to Flint in her book *Literature Lives* “familiarity with non-fiction texts in elementary classrooms is important to developing proficient and effective readers. 50% to 80% of the material on standardized tests is expository ... (and therefore) it is critical for teachers to encourage non-fiction reading in the classroom” (Flint, 330). Exposure to these texts benefits students outside of the standardized testing world. “Most teachers want their students to be literate, civic-minded, and problem posers. In order to achieve these goals, teachers need to offer students opportunities to engage with texts that support children’s inquisitive and curious nature. Nonfiction texts serve as a vehicle for supporting children’s questions, interests and experiences” (Flint, 331). By separating students who need extra supports for learning into small groups for targeted guided reading and phonological awareness lessons, students who have varying instructional needs have a greater opportunity of meeting those needs, with more one on one time or small group time. “The purpose for guided reading groups is to meet the varying instructional needs of all of the students; to support children as they read more or more difficult text; to encourage children to use problem-solving strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words and to understand concepts and themes of the books (laquinta, 2006). ]

### **References**

- Flint, A. S. (2008). *Literate lives: Teaching reading & writing in elementary classrooms*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- laquinta, A. (2006). Guided reading: a research-based response to the challenges of early reading instruction. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(6), 413-418.