

Planning Commentary

Respond to the prompts below (no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including prompts).

1. Central Focus

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

The central focus for the learning segment will be story elements and sequence of events. The students will do several activities involving story elements, including: characters, setting, and plot. They will also be working on sequence of events; beginning, middle, end. The students will be reading the story *Violet's Music* out of their Journeys books. They will also supplement *Violet's Music* with two other stories: *The Incredible Farkle McBride* and *The Three Little Pigs*. I chose *Violet's Music* and *The Incredible Farkle McBride* because they lend themselves well to onomatopoeia; the students will also be doing an activity where they create a comic strip using onomatopoeia. Students will access prior knowledge via *The Three Little Pigs* for a supplemental activity for story elements and sequence of events. Students will then continue working on story elements, and compare and contrast the original story with *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka. The next day, students will access prior knowledge again for the purpose of comparing and contrasting by reading *The Stinky Cheese Man* by Jon Scieszka. I feel these activities are necessary in developing comprehension and inference skills. I also chose these activities because I feel they address the following common core standards: CC.2.R.L.1, CC.2.R.L.2, CC.2.R.L.4, CC.2.R.L.6, CC.2.R.L.7, and CC.2.R.L.9.

- 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

Lesson One: Students will be read the story *The Incredible Farkle McBride*, listen for onomatopoeia, and create a comic strip. This story was chosen as a supplemental activity and story for the weekly story, *Violet's Music*. I feel this is a fun supplemental activity to be used when learning essential literacy strategies because it allows you to recognize its use in stories and recognize how it affects the meaning of the story. After the story, students will review story elements and sequence of events, something that they had been working on with the classroom teacher prior to my taking over for the learning segment. Students will then re-read *Violet's Music*, either with a partner or alone, and the fill out a graphic organizer on story elements. The graphic organizer is a story map with spots for sentences describing the beginning, middle, end, as well as two boxes to illustrate the characters and the setting. Connections will be made between reading and writing because the students will be communicating what they learning by use of a graphic organizer.

Lesson Two: Students will be read the story *The Three Little Pigs*, this accesses prior knowledge as it is a familiar story. After the story, students will review story elements and sequence of events. Students will then fill out a graphic organizer on *The Three Little Pigs*. Connections will be made between reading and writing because the students will be communicating what they learning by use of a

graphic organizer. After filling out the graphic organizer, students will compare and contrast the original story of *The Three Little Pigs* with a different version called: *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka. This activity will be done as a class on the white board, the importance of story elements and sequence of events will be reinforced as they are necessary to properly compare and contrast with the second story.

Lesson Three: Students will compare and contrast other familiar stories and fairy tales with *The Stinky Cheese Man* by Jon Scieszka. Again, the importance of story elements will be reinforced as they are necessary to compare and contrast and understand the humor in the stories told in *The Stinky Cheese Man*. Students will, once again, read *Violet's Music*, this time with a partner, this way students have an opportunity to read and listen. Students will then fill out a story elements graphic organizer, a story circle with six panels. Connections will be made between reading and writing because the students will be communicating what they learning by use of a graphic organizer.

- c. 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.

My plans build on each other and reinforce story elements by incorporating different graphic organizers and using them with different stories. The plans reinforce story elements by showing that they are necessary to compare and contrast different versions of the same story. This is a good way to make connections between the importance of learning story elements and sequence of events and reading. It also allows the students some practice composing texts.

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?**

Students had been working on story elements for a couple weeks prior to the learning segment with the classroom teacher. She assessed their abilities and prior knowledge and gave me direction when planning for my learning segment. Most students are reading at grade level, a few students get pulled for RtI services, 2 students work with an aide. Students have also seen a few different kinds of story element graphic organizers. Students were also familiar with *The Three Little Pigs*, and the original fairy tales that are retold in *The Stinky Cheese Man*. The students are familiar with story elements, but are working on improving their ability to recognize story elements. Onomatopoeia and comic books were used to access prior knowledge; the students often read comic strips in class (*Captain Underpants*). Students are also familiar with superheroes like Batman and Superman, and other common comic strips

- 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?**

A vast majority of the students are Caucasian, 2 of the 23 students in the class are not. The school is located in what appears to be a middle, upper middle, upper class suburban neighborhood. Students appear to be quite affluent. The district is quite wealthy, too. The school has plenty of top of the line technology including, but not limited to, iPads, iPods, MacBook Airls, and iMacs. Each classroom appears to have approximately 7 MacBook Airls, and an iPad and/or iPod Touch. The two computer labs have approximately 25 iMacs and 25 MacBook Airls. Each teacher is provided with their own MacBook Air or MacBook Pro. A majority of the students are in one or more extracurricular activities, dance, soccer, baseball, and gymnastics are some of the activities I heard them talking about. The students really enjoyed independent reading time. A lot of the students read *Captain Underpants*, and a popular series about fairies.

3. Supporting Students’ Literacy Learning

Respond to prompts 3a–c below. As needed, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included to support your explanations. **Use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations, where appropriate.**

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

I knew that the classroom teacher had been working on story elements through my observations prior to the learning segment. She also gave me direction about what the students should be learning about. I also used their interest in comic books to address the onomatopoeia that *Violet’s Music* lends itself to. I took advantage of the technology present in the classroom to model graphic organizers and comic strips. Graphic organizers are a good way to make connections within the reading, they aide in comprehension, and encourage critical thinking. I also asked the students to use their interests when creating the comic strips, things like sports and games they play. When decided on what books to supplement *Violet’s Music* with, I decided on *The Three Little Pigs* because it is a familiar story, *The Stinky Cheese Man* because several students expressed an interest in reading it for a read-aloud. Read-alouds are a good way to build background knowledge; they also provide opportunities to model fluency, voice, and expression. I noticed through my observations that the students frequently took brain breaks, because of this; I incorporated moving around the classroom into the lesson. Students were required to move back and forth from the carpet and their desks. This appeared to cut down on the fidgeting and helped keep them engaged with the lesson.

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

Each lesson incorporated both written and illustrated aspects; students were able to express what they have learned in two different ways. This addressed a couple different learning styles present in the classroom. I also believe that presenting the information

visually, and providing a visual outlet helped the struggling readers, the underperforming students, and the English language learner present in the classroom. The two students that have IEPs worked with a classroom aide and had the option to express their answers verbally and have assistance completing both the written and illustrated portions of the assignments. This assignment was appropriate for gifted students too; they had the option to write more details about the story elements and sequence of events in their graphic organizers. In addition to verbally describing the activities, both on the carpet in front of the classroom, I modeled them on a blank assignment projected onto the white board at the front of the room. This allowed both visual and auditory learners to access the information. The students also frequently worked with partners, this gave the students that prefer interpersonal learning opportunities to access the information. The students that prefer intrapersonal learning also had opportunities to access the information during times when they were working and reading alone.

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 developmental approximations or misunderstandings within your literacy content focus and how you will address them.
 Students might not be completely clear on what elements to pull out of the story for the sequence of events; they might not be crucial to plot development, but may come from the beginning, the middle, and the end. I will address these misunderstandings while walking around the room monitoring students understanding. A second way this misunderstanding will be addressed is during lessons and activities. In lesson 2, activity 3 the class will discuss the story elements and sequence of events of *The Three Little Pigs* for the purpose of comparing the story with an alternate story called *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Lesson 3, activity 1 also addresses this misunderstanding by discussing the beginning, middle, and end of the carious stories throughout *The Stinky Cheese Man*.

4. Supporting Literacy Development Through Language

- a. **Language Demand: Language Function.** From the list below, choose **one** language function essential for student to learn the literacy strategy within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment.

Analyze	Argue	Categorize	Compare/contrast	Describe	Explain
Interpret	Predict	Question	Retell	Summarize	

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

Summarize: Throughout the learning segment, the student will be asked several times to recall the story elements, including sequence of events. This will require the students to summarize the stories they read.

Compare/contrast: In lesson 2, activity 3 and lesson 3, activity 1, students will be asked to compare and contrast between different versions of the same story. First with *The Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, and again with the stories in *The Stinky Cheese Man*.

- c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and 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:
 - Syntax
 - Discourse

When the story was first introduced (On Monday, learning segment is Wednesday-Friday), students were introduced to eight new vocabulary words. The first two days students spent a considerable amount of time learning and discussing the new vocabulary words. The first introduction, the students read and brainstormed ideas on what the new vocabulary words could mean. As a class, students decided on a definition of said words. The definitions the class decided on remained posted for the remainder of the week. Students also completed vocabulary matching worksheets and completed vocabulary sentences for homework. Students will also continue to work on recognizing story elements and sequence of events. Being able to recognize story elements and sequence of events in a story are necessary to be able to summarize a story and compare and contrast different stories. The learning segment provides much practice for story element recognition and provides practice for comparing and contrasting different versions of the same story. The students were also introduced to the word onomatopoeia.

Discourse: Students will need to have written and oral responses to the story elements graphic organizers and discussions in class about the story elements and sequence of events of the stories read. Also, the students were introduced to a new word, onomatopoeia, understanding of the word is necessary to participate in and complete the first and second activities in lesson one.

Consider the range of students' understandings of the language function and other 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 below.
- 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 identified in prompts 4a–c.

Throughout the course of the segment, the students get several opportunities to practice story elements. Before each activity dealing with story elements, students review what the story elements are, characters, setting, plot, beginning, middle, and end. Additional support is provided through the modeling of graphic organizers. Students get a couple opportunities to expand on the story elements practice they have been getting by working on comparing and contrasting different versions of the same story during two

activities in the learning segment. Students are also introduced to the word onomatopoeia. The introduction of the word is supported by a class discussion on what the word means, a brainstorming activity where students produce examples of onomatopoeia, a power point presentation with examples of onomatopoeia, and an activity where the students create their own comic strips using onomatopoeia.

5. Monitoring Student Learning

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.

The most formal assessments completed during the learning segment were the graphic organizers. There are no tests or letter grades given out, the classroom teacher measures student performance through the completion of assignments. The graphic organizers showed the students' ability to recognize story elements. Students will fill out a variety of graphic organizers that require the students to recognize the necessary parts of the story. The graphic organizers also increase in difficulty, starting with recognizing three events in sequential order, up to six events in sequential order. Students also proved their understanding of onomatopoeia through the completion of comic strips that required the use of onomatopoeia.

Informal assessment was done through whole class discussion, questioning, and one-on-one instruction while walking around the room monitoring student learning. During whole class instruction, I posed questions that required the students to recall the different aspects of story elements and sequence of events. I also asked them the story elements of one of the stories we had been reading for purposes of comparing and contrasting that story with a different version of the same story. I monitored student learning by walking around the room and talking with each table, if students needed further explanation, I was able to provide clarification. I posed questions that required the student to verbally provide the story elements. If even further clarification was needed, I would ask the students what happened first, second, third, or next in the story. I would then work with the student to recognize the main story elements.

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

There is a wide variety of ability as proven by the MAP scores, students range from the 99th percentile to the 4th percentile, with a majority of the students falling in the 40th-70th percentile range. For the graphic organizers, students are required to write and/or illustrate the story elements. This gives struggling writers the opportunity to provide responses via illustrations. There is also a classroom aide assigned to work with the two students in the classroom that have IEPs, but she provides supports for all students. I also give a lot of verbal instruction and modeling. These techniques were used to address the needs of both visual and auditory learners. Students are also allowed to stand up and move around while working at their desks, but must maintain indoor voices and follow the classroom rules. I believe this addresses the needs of the kinesthetic learner.



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.