

TASK 1: PLANNING COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

1. Central Focus

- a. Describe the **central focus** and the essential literacy strategy for comprehending **OR** composing text you will teach in the learning segment.

[The school curriculum requires that the first grade students conduct an author study on Mem Fox, a famous Australian author. The students must learn specific writing strategies that Mem uses within her writing and incorporate those writing strategies into their independent writing pieces. Therefore, the central focus of these four lessons is to have students integrate new writing strategies into their own writing style based upon the craft moves that were identified within the mentor texts. Three mentor texts written by Mem Fox will be introduced to the students, and each text contains a specific craft move, or writing strategy, that makes the text exciting to read, such as sensory imagery. The students will be learning how to integrate emotions, sensory imagery, and rhyme and repetition into their own writing in order to compose a more engaging and appealing writing piece for their audience. These four lessons are merely the introduction to the author study, and are considered to be an immersive writing workshop where the students are expected to identify each strategy, and then integrate the strategies into their own writing in order to become familiar with them.]

- b. Given the central focus, describe how the **standards and learning objectives** within your learning segment address
- the essential literacy strategy
 - related skills that support use of the strategy
 - reading/writing connections

[The central focus involves the students integrating new writing strategies into their own writing style. Before they are able to integrate the new strategies, they must be able to identify these specific craft moves. Therefore, the essential literacy strategy is simply having the students identify the strategies in the mentor texts. With assistance and prompting from the teacher during both the read aloud and minilesson in the first writing workshop lesson, the students will be expected to identify words and phrases in the mentor text, Koala Lou, that suggest feeling. In this mentor text, Mem incorporates feelings and emotions into her story by using feeling words or emotional action words, such as cry, hide, cheer, and stomping feet. These words and phrases suggest feelings of being sad, excited, and happy within the context of the story. This essential literacy strategy of identifying the craft moves relates to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.EL.1.4. Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses. This standard also relates to the second lesson, where students are expected, with assistance and prompting from the teacher, to identify words within the mentor text Night Noises that appeal to the senses. This lesson focuses on sensory imagery, and the students are expected to identify that the sound words (click, clack, mutter, murmur, shh, etc.) appeal to the sense of sound. The main character's appearance is described utilizing similes and describing words, which the students are also expected to identify as appealing to the sense of sight. Within this lesson, the identified words that appeal to the five senses are labeled as sensory imagery words, and the students are required to

integrate sensory imagery words into their own writing, as is stated in the central focus of the lesson. The third lesson involves the students identifying rhyme and repetition within the mentor text Zoo-Looking and describing how it adds a sense of excitement to the story. This aspect of the lesson relates to the second grade standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song. Both standards, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.EL.1.4. and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4, relate to reading and writing connections, since the students must identify the strategies in the mentor texts (reading), and then integrate them within their own writing (writing).

The students must have knowledge of numerous related skills in order to complete the task of integrating newly introduced writing strategies into their own writing. The first grade students that are being taught these four lessons are well informed when it comes to foundational skills. The writing workshop model and the Foundations program that they partake in has enabled them to become impressive writers at the first grade level. For the most part, they are able to write complete sentences that contain capitalization and punctuation, which relates to standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1 Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print. They also exhibit the necessary skills in relation to phonological awareness, where they are able to segment syllables and blend phonemes in order to spell both simple and difficult words, which makes their writing readable and easy to decipher. The related phonological skills that they exhibit, which will assist them in composing their writing pieces, relates to standards CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes). Throughout the four lessons, the students will be collaborating with partners during the minilessons, which relates to the standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

The learning objectives within this learning segment address the essential literacy strategy, the related skills, and reading/writing connections. The learning objective for the first lesson states: Students will be able to compose a Quick Write that integrates emotions and feelings into their story based upon what was learned through reading the mentor text Koala Lou by Mem Fox and identifying the craft move that she used with at least 75% of the class receiving a score of a 3 on the Quick Write rubric. The essential literacy strategy is addressed in the objective since it states that the students will be identifying the new craft move, or writing strategy, within the mentor text. Since the students are composing a writing piece, the related skills are implied within the objective, since the students must comprehend sentence structure and phonological awareness in order to compose a text. The reading and writing connection appear in the objective when it states, “through reading the mentor text Koala Lou by Mem Fox and identifying the craft move that she used...” As the teacher reads or reviews the mentor text, the students must identify the craft move/aspects of the craft move that Mem used and that they will later integrate into their own writing. The objectives for the following three lessons are similar in structure and therefore will also address the essential literacy strategy, the related skills, and reading/writing connections in a comparable format.]

- c. **Explain how your plans build on each other** to help students **make connections** between the essential literacy strategy to comprehend **OR** compose text and related skills that support use of the strategy in meaningful contexts.

[The goal of this learning segment is to provide students with a multitude of writing strategies that they will be able to integrate into their own writing. The plans build upon each other since the students are taught a new craft move over the course of the first

three lessons. Therefore, upon completion of the learning segment, the students will have three new writing strategies that they can continue to add to their writing throughout the duration of first grade, and they can take those strategies with them as they enter second grade. Writing in general is a process that requires skills that build upon each other. The students have already acquired the skills and strategies that it takes to form correct sentences and construct a story. Now they are being introduced to strategies that will make their writing exciting. They know the basics, so this learning segment is meant to teach them how to be creative with their writing. With each lesson, the students are able to become more and more creative with the stories they write and the craft moves they add.]

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 or 504 plans, 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—**Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

[Through Writing Workshop, the students have learned how to construct a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end, as well as develop stories with a problem and solution. They have written personal narratives, How-To books, and All About books that include a table of contents, diagrams, and a glossary. They typically write these stories in blank writing booklets containing 4-5 pages. The students are taught using Lucy Calkins' Writing Workshop model. With this model, the students have developed very impressive writing skills that allow them to think outside of the box and create writing pieces that can be quite extensive in length. The students have utilized mentor texts many times prior to this learning segment, for both writing and reading workshop. They are familiar with the term mentor text and understand the concept of drawing inspiration from an author's work. They know that a craft move is a writing strategy within a mentor text that adds a level of excitement to the story. Through the mentor text *Night of the Veggie Monster* by George McClements, the students learned how to add ellipses, pop-out words, and exact action words. This lesson was taught very early in October, and the students still use these strategies in their writing (it is currently March). Many National Geographic Kids books were considered mentor texts as the students learned writing strategies to include in their All About Books. The students understand that learning from others is very effective, and often times necessary in order to improve upon their own work. The students are also familiar with the concept Show, Don't Tell! from a previous lesson about incorporating emotions into their writing. I am re-introducing this concept during the first lesson in the learning segment in order to draw upon previous academic knowledge. The students are

The students are well versed in developing compositional pieces, but there are still many things that they are still learning. They are still learning how to add more detail to their stories and how to expand upon their ideas within their writing. The students are familiar with pre-writing; however, it is a concept that is still being developed. That is one of the reasons why I included brainstorming pages (e.g. Assessment Materials 1.3) within their

Quick Write Booklets. I am providing them with an opportunity to practice planning out their thoughts and ideas before writing. This will eventually create a smooth transition into forming graphic organizers prior to starting larger writing assessments later on in their education. The students are also still learning how to use their resources. There is a great big word wall within the classroom that contains many sight words and vocabulary words, but the students tend not to utilize the wall and in turn spell many easy words incorrectly. There are also numerous anchor charts throughout the classroom that highlight important writing and reading information. The students tend to disregard those resources as well and instead just raise their hand to ask the teacher. In order to provide them with an opportunity to learn how to use their resources, I included a Tips and Tricks page (e.g. Assessment Materials 1.2) in the first three Quick Write Booklets. The first three booklets (Assessment Materials 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3, and 3.1-3.3) contain a Tips and Tricks Page that looks like the anchor chart that was displayed during those minilessons. My hopes are that the students make the connection that the Tips and Tricks page is extremely helpful, and will therefore find that anchor charts are a great resource. A minor goal in this learning segment is to definitely teach students to utilize the resources that they are provided with. The students are taught foundation skills everyday, but the students often times struggle with basic writing conventions, such as capitalizing the first letter in a sentence and placing punctuation at the end of a sentence.]

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

[The students within this first grade classroom are extremely diverse. There are students of Albanian, Mexican, Vietnamese, Caribbean, Indian, Irish, and other various backgrounds. There are six English Language Learners within the classroom, and all of their parents speak their native language at home, often times making it difficult to communicate with their families. One student has severe behavioral problems and goes to a partial care facility for three afternoons out of the five days of school. The Albanian student had never been in school before until the beginning of this year. He did not attend kindergarten. His first lesson when he got to first grade was how to hold a pencil. One student's grandparents have custody of her since her mother is unable to care for her. One student took a leave of absence from school for a month in order to attend her cousin's wedding in Indian. Each student is extremely immersed in his/her own culture, which produces a very unique and diverse learning environment.

Unfortunately, many of the students have broken homes and poor home lives. The students who are fortunate enough to have adequate home lives are well cared for, and are enrolled in gymnastics, football, soccer, and various other sports. All of the students are interested in technology, namely iPads, computers, video game consoles, etc. One of the students has his own iPhone and is allowed to stay up late every night in order to play video games and watch YouTube videos. I love implementing technology into the classroom, but I have come to realize that it should only be incorporated occasionally. What the students really need is to be engaged with one another rather than being engaged with a piece of technology. From this engagement, I have realized that all of the students are very social and they all typically get along really well. The boys love to pretend that they are robots and superheroes, and the girls love to play with the popular toys known as Shopkins. Upon completion of their All About Books, I also learned that the majority of students love cats, dogs and flowers. I tried to incorporate these interests

into the topics for their Quick Write Booklets, so they would be actively engaged and excited to participate.]

3. Supporting Students' Literacy Learning

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

- a. Justify how your understanding of your students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students' prior academic learning, their assets, and research/theory.

[The students in which I am teaching are very familiar with writing in blank booklets. These booklets consist of 4-5 pages and each page has a place to draw a picture and a few lines to write on. Whenever they are taught a new writing strategy or asked to write a personal narrative, How-To piece or All About Book, they head to the front of the room to pick up a new writing booklet from the bin. I have found that the students sometimes become confused with these blank booklets since they do not necessarily provide students with a direction or guided. Therefore, I conducted research to figure out how I could form these booklets into something that would provide the students with a direction, as well as give them an opportunity to pre-write before they begin to fill their booklet with a story. I discovered research on Quick Writes and decided that would be a great formative assessment to determine whether the students truly grasped what I would be teaching them. I also found extensive research on the topic of anchor charts. The students are extremely familiar with anchor charts since I use them quite frequently for every subject. Therefore, I knew I would be incorporating anchor charts relating to each of the craft moves I would be teaching. Since I want the students to further understand the importance of utilizing their resources, I again adapted their writing booklet by incorporating a mini anchor chart, which they could constantly refer to. These anchor charts are also extremely important for the English Language Learners since they provide visuals and allow them to make connections. In order to provide students with a means to pre-write, I adapted the booklet once more to include a Brainstorm page, which is essentially an area that will help students determine which aspects of each craft move they will integrate into their own writing. This Brainstorm page contains topics that the students are personally interested in, such as robots, flowers, cats, dogs, Shopkins, etc. in order to promote an authentic learning experience.

Since the students work very well together, and their diverse attributes contribute to intellectual and meaningful conversation, I made sure that the students participated in a partner talk at least one time in each lesson. Learning theory stresses the importance of partner talks, discussions, and conversations in order to promote social and academic learning.

- 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.**

[The instructional strategies I utilized within this learning segment are appropriate for the whole class since I followed the Lucky Calkins' Writing Workshop model to guide my instruction. I began each lesson with a minilesson that contained a connection, presentation, active engagement, and a link. The students then proceeded to write

independently. This teaching model for writing instruction is proven to be extremely effective in the classroom since it relates writing to reading, allows for an allotted time for students to authentically participate in the craft of writing, and directly involves student engagement. As previously mentioned, I also displayed anchor charts in each lesson to provide visual learners, as well as English Language Learners, with the visual literacy they need in order to grasp the presented writing strategies. In addition to anchor charts, I differentiated the Quick Write Booklets for each lesson for the purpose of catering to the specific learning needs of certain English Language Learners. These differentiated booklets are appropriate for the English Language Learners since they are developed to break down the learning task into simpler terms that the English Language Learners will understand, and the assessments are not as difficult as the standard task of trying to integrate a craft move into their own writing. The students will still be learning about each craft move, but not completing the same tasks as the other students who are able to do so.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

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

[Common misconceptions that young students have with mentor texts is that they are expected to copy exactly what the author writes in order to be successful. It can be difficult for young students to comprehend the fact that the mentor texts are solely used for inspiration and to teach a specific writing strategy, rather than being displayed for the purpose of directly copying its content. The students being taught in this learning segment are aware that mentor texts are not to be copied, but I will review the rules of mentor texts before the segment is implemented. I will remind the students that Mem's books are being shown to them as inspiration and to teach them how to use specific craft moves that will make their own writing just as fun and exciting as Mem's writing is. I will remind them that they are writing their own stories and coming up with their own ideas as to how they will integrate the craft moves into their writing, rather than using exactly what Mem wrote. In order to make sure the students are not inclined to directly copy Mem's books, I have included the Brainstorm pages into the Quick Write Booklets (Assessment Materials 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3, 3.1-3.3, and 4.1-4.2). These Brainstorm pages not only serve as a pre-writing resource, but they also ensure that the students will be creating and developing their own writing, rather than being given the opportunity to directly copy Mem. Being provided the opportunity to brainstorm and plan before writing will also dissuade students from claiming that they could not come up with an idea to write about, so they instead just copied the mentor text. This excuse will simple be unacceptable, since students will be provided with the materials to pre-plan and devise a story of their own.]

4. Supporting Literacy Development Through Language

As you respond to prompts 4a–d, consider the range of students' language assets and needs—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

- a. **Language Function.** Using information about your students' language assets and needs, identify **one** language function essential for students to develop and practice 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	Integrate

[The language function for this learning segment is integrate. The students will integrate the craft moves that they learn from Mem Fox’s mentor texts into their own writing. They will learn to integrate emotion, sensory imagery, and rhyme and repetition into their writing.]

- c. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function in ways that support the essential literacy strategy. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[In Lesson 1, students will learn the craft move of adding emotion and feelings into a story by using emotional action words, such as smile, cry, run away, hide, etc. This is the strategy known as Show, Don’t Tell. The students are expected to integrate these action words into their own writing in order to show a character’s emotion, rather than simply stating how the character is feeling.]

- d. **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:

Academic Language and Vocabulary:

- Mentor text
- Craft move
- Writing strategy
- Show, Don’t Tell
- Emotional action words
- Emotions
- Senses
- Sensory imagery
- Sensory imagery words
- Rhyme
- Repetition
- Repeating Patterns

- **Plus** at least one of the following:

- **Syntax**

- Discourse

[Students need to understand how sentences are constructed and the general rules of word order and grammar in order to successfully complete the task at hand. If the student is unable to form comprehensive sentences, then the story he/she writes will not make sense, the craft move will most likely be overlooked, and the student will receive a poor score.]

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

- Identify and describe the planned instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) to help students understand, develop, and use the identified language demands (function, vocabulary or key phrases, discourse, or syntax).

[In lesson 1, the primary instructional support was the Emotions: Show, Don't Tell Anchor Chart (Instructional Materials 1.2). This chart contained six common emotions, as well as emotional action words that can be used to express those emotions. For instance, actions words that are used to express happiness are smile, jump up and down, laugh and dance. This anchor chart will be used to help students integrate emotion into their Quick Writes. It also showcases the vocabulary phrase: Show, Don't Tell, as well as the word "emotions."

In lesson 2, the primary instructional support was the Sensory Imagery anchor chart (Instructional Materials 2.2). This chart contains a short definition for sensory imagery, and allowed students to practice using sensory imagery words to describe chocolate ice cream. It served as practice for brainstorming describing words that appeal to the senses, which students must integrate into their own writing.

In lesson 3, the primary instructional supports were the Rhyme anchor chart (Instructional Materials 3.2) and the Repetition anchor chart (Instructional Materials 3.3). These anchor chart displayed the two key terms for this lesson and their definitions, as well as examples for each. The students will also provided with index cards during active engagement in order to practice matching rhyming words.

I also plan to wear a lanyard around my neck that contains an index card with key vocabulary terms for each lesson, such as emotions, Show, Don't Tell, sensory imagery, rhyme, and repetition. While circulating the room to assist students during independent writing, this lanyard will allow them to use the specific vocabulary when conferring with me, in addition to reminding them of what they are learning.]

5. Monitoring Student Learning

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

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

[The Quick Write Booklets (Assessment Materials 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3, 3.1-3.3, and 4.1-4.2) are formal assessments that will provide evidence of understanding for each student. In each Quick Write Booklet, the students must first brainstorm what they will write about and what aspects of the craft move they will incorporate in their writing. They are then provided with three blank writing pages (Assessment Materials 0.1) where they are expected to integrate the craft move, thus showing they are able to utilize the essential literacy strategy of having identified the important aspects of the craft move, and then integrating the strategy into their own writing.

The informal assessment of having students rate their confidence levels about completing the tasks after each minilesson will allow me to gauge which students may need assistance with integrating the craft move and which students will most likely be successful with their integration. Conferring with students and taking anecdotal notes will

provide me with direct evidence upon observation of students and whether or not they are able to integrate the craft move into their writing.]

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

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

[I spent a great deal of time differentiating and modifying the Quick Write Booklets for the distinct needs of individual learners within the classroom. Two learners received an extremely simplified version of the booklets. These learners are English Language Learners that struggle to express themselves through writing and also contain gaps in academic knowledge. If the work is not simplified to meet their needs, these students will not do the work. Therefore, I developed tasks for them that still challenged them to comprehend the craft moves, but they were allowed to express their thoughts through drawing pictures. For example, in lesson 2, instead of integrating sensory imagery into a writing piece, they were asked to draw a picture of me using their sense of sight and had to write labels with sensory imagery words, such as blonde hair, black pants, etc. (Assessment Material 2.5). Two other English Language Learners are slightly more advanced, and are able to minimally express themselves through writing, but they are in need of prompting. I still required these students to integrate the craft moves into their writing, but I gave them a prompt to write about rather than having them brainstorm their own ideas, which would be too difficult for their level of understanding. An example of this prompting can be found in the Quick Write booklet for lesson 3 (Assessment Materials 3.7). I prompted these students with the four rhyming words I wanted them to integrate into their writing. There are four advanced proficient writing students in the classroom, and in order to challenge them, I provided them with more than three blank writing pages. If these students finished their story, I gave them the opportunity to receive another Quick Write Booklet where they would integrate the strategy a second time, but they were to choose a different topic, a different emotion, and different sense, or different rhyming words (depending upon the lesson.)]