TN Department of Education

TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE

Practical guidance for developing proficient readers, writers, and thinkers

K–3

TN Department of Education

VISION STATEMENT

Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

CONTENTS

SECTION		PAGE
1	Introduction	4
2	Vision for Reading Proficiency	9
3	Tennessee's Approach to Literacy Instruction	10
4	A Framework for Teaching Literacy in Tennessee	11
5	Teaching Literacy in Tennessee Vignette	14
6	Before Instruction: Planning for the Unit	36
7	During Instruction: Key Practices	45
8	After Instruction: Reflection	50
9	Summary/Conclusion	52
10	Glossary	53
11	References	55

Instructional Decisions

INTRODUCTION

The research is clear: reading proficiently prepares students for lifelong success. Unfortunately, Tennessee students have fallen behind their peers across the nation in reading. Over the past several years, our results in reading have remained stagnant and, in some cases, have declined. In 2015, on the TCAP assessment, only 43 percent of third-grade students were proficient in reading, and similarly, on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), only one-third of fourth graders were reading on grade level. This means that the majority of Tennessee students are not as prepared as they need to be for the next school year and are not yet on track with the knowledge and skills to embark on their chosen path in life. Addressing this challenge requires a focused, collective effort among state, district, school, and classroom leaders. The good news is that **together, we are making progress**.

At the state level, supporting high-quality literacy instruction is a central priority. In 2015, the Tennessee Department of Education launched *Tennessee Succeeds*, a five-year strategic plan. A cornerstone of *Tennessee Succeeds* is the **Read to be Ready campaign, a statewide initiative launched in 2016 by Governor and First Lady Haslam and Commissioner McQueen, to move at least 75 percent of Tennessee third graders to reading proficiency by 2025.**

TIP!
Words or phrases with yellow highlighting are defined in the Glossary.

The Read to be Ready campaign is grounded in the following five philosophies:

- **Early literacy matters**: Early language and literacy development must begin at birth because of its direct impact on later success in reading and in life.
- **But, it's never too late**: With quality resources and support, even those who are not reading on grade level by third grade can catch up.
- **Reading is more than sounding out words**: Reading is thinking deeply about a text's meaning and how it builds knowledge of the world around us.
- **Teacher knowledge and practice are critical**: Educators must have a deep understanding of the art and science of literacy instruction in order to develop lifelong learners.
- **It takes a community**: We each hold a piece of the puzzle, and we must do our part to improve literacy in Tennessee.

In addition to Read to be Ready, state leaders firmly believe that **early literacy matters** and are working to strengthen literacy instruction for children ages birth to kindergarten. **Robust summer reading camps** will provide another layer of support to rising first, second, and third grade students who are not reading on grade level. The new **Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)** will provide teachers with important information about what children know and are able to do at the beginning of kindergarten in order to meet individual learning needs. Additionally, the **new second-grade assessment**, which aligns to the third-grade assessment, will give us insight into each student's progress, in both skills and knowledge, as they exit second grade and enter this critical benchmark year. Through **pre-K, kindergarten, and first-grade portfolios**, we plan to collect better information about each teacher's effectiveness and to give them the support they need. While an immediate focus on teachers currently in the classroom is essential, we must also better prepare aspiring teachers. The department is currently developing new and **more rigorous standards for the preparation for teaching reading in early grades**.

Districts and schools have also prioritized early literacy. Research conducted across Tennessee and reported in the *Building the Framework* report (2017) notes that **districts and schools are making important structural changes to prioritize reading**, like decisions around daily schedules and student placements; however, **these structural changes are not yet *consistently* coupled with classroom instruction that pushes students to meet the rigorous expectations of the Tennessee Academic Standards**.

Despite the challenging work ahead of us, Tennessee's future is bright. Through the Read to be Ready initiative and our collective focus on literacy, reading instruction in Tennessee classrooms *is improving*. But, we have more work to do to ensure our students are prepared with a strong foundation in reading. While addressing this challenge calls for leadership at all levels, it most importantly calls for teacher leadership because classrooms are where the vital work of teaching literacy happens every day. **This document, *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, outlines the high-impact teaching practices that will help Tennessee educators develop students into proficient readers, writers, and thinkers, setting them up for success in school and beyond.**

TENNESSEE-SPECIFIC FINDINGS

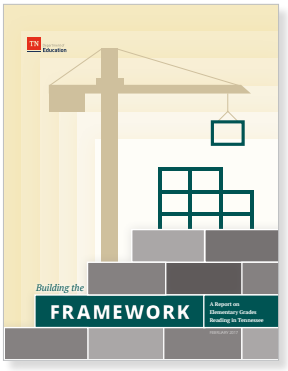
Setting the Foundation

FEBRUARY 2016

TIP!
Click links to open resources in your Internet browser.

Research highlighted in *Setting the Foundation*[29] suggests that one cause for Tennessee's stagnant reading proficiency is isolated skill instruction. In other words, far too many of our students have passed through elementary school without acquiring a strong foundation—strong decoding skills coupled with vocabulary acquisition and deep comprehension—and instead have focused heavily on decoding the letters on a page. Critical thinking and comprehension skills fostered by exposure to complex texts are essential and determine student success both in and outside the classroom. Literacy instruction that pushes students to think more deeply and connect ideas and skills will help ensure that our students don't fall behind during early elementary school. The recommendations from this report are focused on supporting teachers to deliver instruction that will develop students' skills-based and knowledge-based competencies

1. Support deeper literacy instruction to ensure that students learn decoding within the context of broader comprehension.
2. Increase schools' and teachers' ability to differentiate instruction in the early grades and to target students' academic and non-academic needs as early as possible.
3. Improve RTI² implementation for students who need greater support in specific skill areas.
4. Get better at getting better.



Building the Framework

FEBRUARY 2017

Building the Framework[28], released one year after the Setting the Foundation report, reveals that we've made progress in teaching literacy skills, but that progress is not yet accompanied by critical instructional shifts and classrooms supports. In particular, students rarely engage in lesson sequences or classroom activities that intentionally build the crucial knowledge-based competencies, like vocabulary and comprehension, alongside the skills-based competencies, such as phonics and decoding. As a result, students are meeting the expectations of classroom assignments, but they are not yet engaging regularly at the level of rigor demanded by the Tennessee Academic Standards. The report suggests the following four next steps for elevating instruction to the next level:

1. Students need more opportunities to practice reading foundational skills within authentic reading and writing experiences.
2. Texts should be intentionally selected and sequenced to build students' knowledge and vocabulary.
3. Students need to be assigned standards-aligned, challenging tasks that ask them to demonstrate understanding of complex and interesting texts, analysis of the author's craft, and/or the knowledge they gained from the content of those texts.
4. Teachers should make use of strong question sequences that support student understanding and analysis of complex, high-quality texts.

RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS

There is a significant amount of research regarding early grades reading. This document and the framework for teaching literacy are grounded the following five research takeaways:

1 **Students need the opportunity to engage with a large amount of texts.** Students should spend a substantial portion of their day engaged in listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts. The amount of time students spend reading and listening to text is a major contributor to improvement in students' vocabulary and comprehension. Additionally, regular practice reading is essential to develop students' fluency and word recognition.[2, 8, 9, 18, 24]

2 **Students need the opportunity to read complex texts.** Complex texts are texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor aligned with grade level expectations. The complex texts selected should represent a range of narrative and informational genres to support students' development of knowledge and vocabulary. Providing students with access to complex texts generates opportunities to stretch students' literacy skills while simultaneously building their world knowledge and vocabulary. Research also recommends utilizing complex texts that integrate other disciplines in order to support the balance of both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies in early literacy instruction.[1, 6, 12, 14, 19]

3 **Students need to think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing.** Research tells us that teachers should give students ample opportunities to read, reread, respond to questions that require them to go back into the text and engage in discussions with peers. In fact, there is a growing body of study to support teachers taking the role of facilitator of knowledge by guiding students through text-based discussions. Authentic classroom discussion allows students to share and expand their thinking and use language in new ways. Specifically, discussions about texts provide opportunities for students to collaboratively build knowledge that in turn supports and strengthens their writing. Students' overall reading development is supported when they have opportunities to respond to text verbally and then in writing.[12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 32]

4 **Students need to develop writing skills in connection to what they are reading.** Just as the volume of reading is essential to developing proficiency as a reader, time spent writing is essential to developing proficiency as a reader, writer, and thinker. These skills should be taught through mini-lessons in connection to text—rather than in isolation. Authentic opportunities to write in response to text provides a vehicle through which teachers can support students in developing writing skills. Reading and listening to texts assists students in thinking like writers, while intentional and direct instruction assists students in developing the skills of writers. Opportunities for authentic writing also support students' understanding of sentence composition, which in turn supports their reading proficiency.[7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 26]

5 **Students need practice with foundational literacy skills that have been explicitly taught and systematically applied through reading and writing.** Every reading and writing experience should provide students with an opportunity to develop multiple skills-based competencies. Teachers should provide explicit and systematic instruction on foundational skills, such as: print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition, and fluency. Once students receive instruction in particular skills based on a carefully planned sequence, they will progress more quickly when provided with opportunities to apply those skills in the context of authentic reading and writing as opposed to isolated skill and drill work. [3, 5]

SKILLS-BASED AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED COMPETENCIES

Proficient readers use both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies to make meaning from text. Each one is vitally important, and neither serves as the foundation for the other; rather, **students must develop skills-based and knowledge-based competencies at the same time.**[20]

SKILLS-BASED COMPETENCIES

These competencies are **constrained skills**, meaning that they are learned completely and are universally needed to read and write. Skills-based competencies support students in foundationally understanding how letters, sounds, and words work in print.

- Print Concepts
- Fluency
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics and Word Recognition
- Word Composition (spelling)

Shawn *was highly skilled at deciphering the words on a page. Tests of his ability to blend letter sounds into words and recognize complex spelling patterns placed him on par with fourth grade students. Yet Shawn struggled with comprehension. He routinely failed to derive meaning from the sentences he decoded, and his ability to fly through reading material rarely translated into broader or deeper learning. As the year continued, Shawn's weak comprehension base left him struggling with any task that required more than word recognition.**

KNOWLEDGE-BASED COMPETENCIES

These competencies are **unconstrained skills**, meaning that they develop across a lifetime and are not identical for all readers. Knowledge-based competencies support students in creating meaning from text.

- The Ability to Understand and Express Complex Ideas
- Vocabulary
- Oral Language Skills
- Concepts about the World

Gerald *lacked basic reading fluency, with reading screeners placing his abilities at an early first-grade level. Yet when he had help decoding letters on the page, Gerald brought a deep engagement with the text's meaning and a wide range of comprehension strategies, such as the ability to compare multiple versions of a story. This allowed him to draw useful information from the text. These abilities created a very different arc of progress throughout the year. As targeted interventions addressed Gerald's skill deficits, he was able to excel across subject areas.**

*From *Setting the Foundation*

VISION FOR READING PROFICIENCY

2
VISION

In order to better support educators in teaching literacy, a recommendation in the *Setting the Foundation* (2016) report, the state first needed to define reading proficiency so that all education stakeholders could work together from a shared definition. To this end, the department of education convened the Early Learning Council, which was a group of Tennessee teachers, instructional coaches, principals, district leaders, and university professors, who met multiple times over the course of a year to develop our state's *Vision for Reading Proficiency*[31].

The Early Learning Council determined that the end goal and defining trait of reading proficiency is students' ability to make meaning from text and, through that meaning-making process, build knowledge about the world around them. The graphic below outlines what it means to be a proficient reader.

Several related factors support students in achieving this outcome:

- Academic standards
- Access to high-quality texts
- Effective instruction

It is essential that texts are made accessible to all students through effective literacy instruction, regardless of students' decoding ability, background knowledge, primary language, current interest in reading, or any other variable.

Proficient reading is all about making meaning from texts.

PROFICIENT READERS...

- **Accurately, fluently, and independently read a wide range of content-rich, age-appropriate, and complex texts**
- **Construct interpretations and arguments through speaking and writing**
- **Strategically employ comprehension strategies to analyze key ideas and information**
- **Develop vocabulary**
- **Build knowledge about the world**

TENNESSEE'S APPROACH TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION

To meet the challenge of building strong readers and thinkers, *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* is designed to provide an instructional framework and offer practical guidance for pre-K through fourth grade teachers, including ESL and special educators, to implement high-quality Tier I literacy practices that will develop *all* K–3 students into proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

This document outlines an approach to literacy that integrates both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies into a framework for K–3 instruction that emphasizes the importance of students listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts. Tennessee's approach is informed by research and evidence from the field, and it does not adhere to any one specific approach (e.g., balanced literacy, whole language, or phonics first). Tennessee's framework recognizes the flexibility that is needed to plan instruction. It is anchored in the Tennessee Academic Standards and the needs of Tennessee students.

The framework for *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* is predicated on a **theory of action that is grounded in research:**

If we provide daily opportunities for all students to build skills-based and knowledge-based competencies by...

- **engaging in a high volume of reading;**
- **reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level;**
- **thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing;**
- **developing the skill and craft of a writer; and**
- **practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing;**

then, we will meet or exceed our goal of having 75 percent of third graders reading on grade level by 2025.

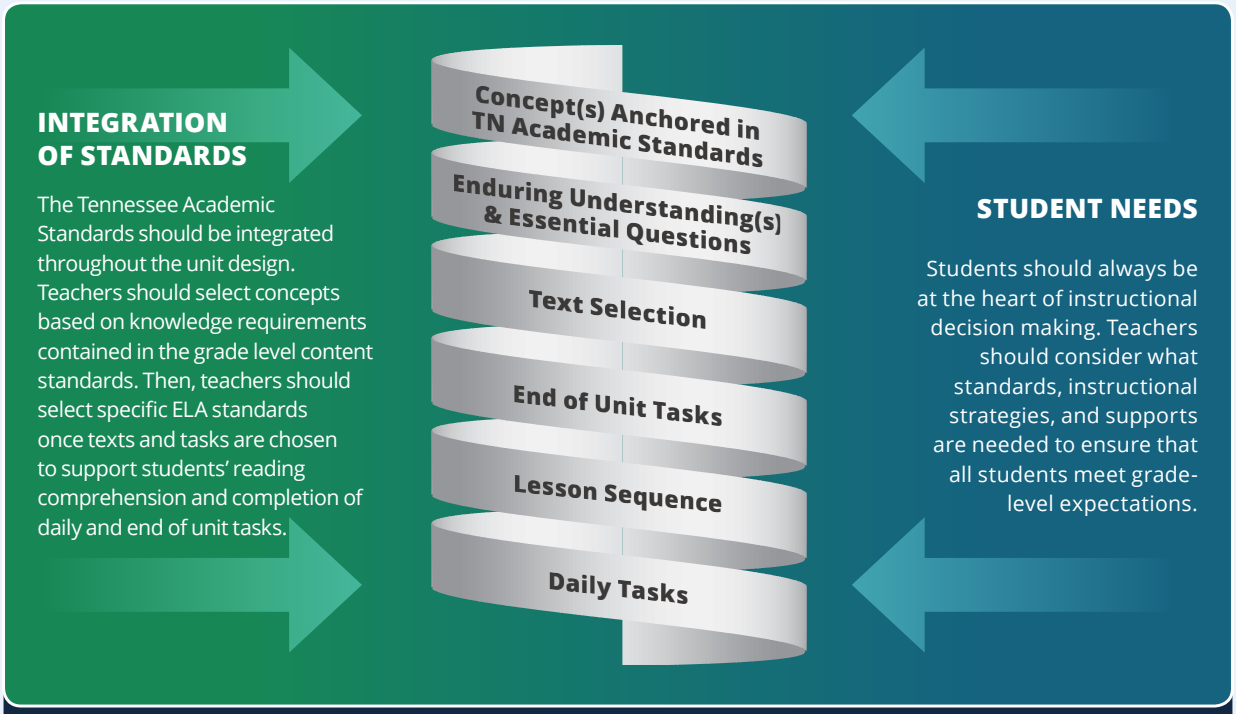
A FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE

Our theory of action for *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* is reflected in the instructional framework that follows. The framework highlights the ways in which teachers create the types of daily opportunities outlined in the theory of action by utilizing:

- literacy-based instructional strategies,
- multiple sources of data, and
- differentiation

to provide effective Tier I instruction to all students.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE



Designing units is not a completely linear process. Teachers should continually think about the integration of standards and student needs as they plan units.

STEP 1

IDENTIFY CONCEPT(S)

Teachers should first identify a concept(s) that will become the foundation of the unit. This step should be guided by an integration of the Tennessee Academic Standards including ELA, science, social studies, and fine arts. The standards provide a general guide for the types of knowledge students should gain in their respective grade levels, which will help in identifying appropriate concept(s).

STEP 2

DETERMINE ENDURING UNDERSTANDING(S) AND GENERATE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Teachers should determine enduring understanding(s) and generate essential questions that prioritize the learning around the concept(s). Enduring understanding(s) are statements reflecting the conclusions students will draw as a result of engaging with the concept, and essential questions are open-ended questions that spark students to draw the conclusions needed to gain the enduring understanding.[23, 34, 35, 36]

STEP 3

SELECT MULTIPLE TEXTS

Teachers should select multiple texts that reflect the expectations of grade-level standards and support the enduring understandings. Texts should be worthy of students' time and attention, be of exceptional craft and quality, and provoke a deep level of thinking.

STEP 4

DEVELOP END-OF-UNIT TASKS

Teachers should develop end-of-unit tasks, which should allow students opportunities to apply what they have read, heard, and seen during unit in an authentic and meaningful way. End-of-unit tasks should allow students to demonstrate critical thinking and textual analysis skills and convey conceptual knowledge around the enduring understandings of the unit.

STEP 5

DESIGN LESSON SEQUENCES

Teachers should design lesson sequences that build in complexity over time and support students in gaining the enduring understandings. The lesson sequences should utilize a variety of instructional strategies that ensure students have opportunities to deepen their understanding.

STEP 6

CREATE DAILY TASKS

Teachers should create standards-aligned daily tasks that allow students to incrementally show their knowledge and skills until they are able to fully demonstrate their learning through the more comprehensive end-of-unit task.

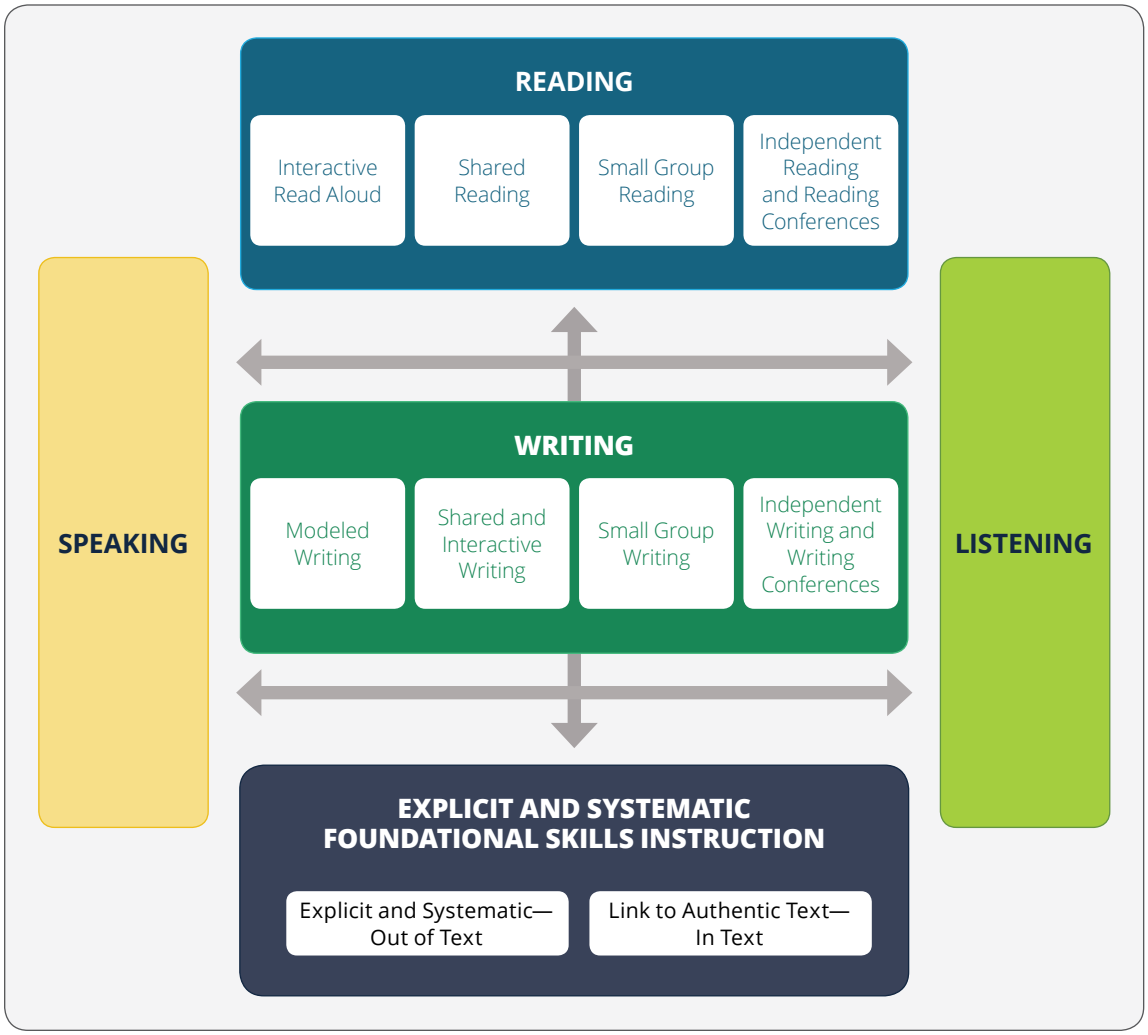
Over time, units connect to develop a cohesive scope and sequence that ensures students have access to a standards-based guaranteed and viable curriculum.

ELEMENTS OF THE LITERACY BLOCK

As teachers utilize the framework to design units, they develop literacy blocks that support students in all strands of the Tennessee ELA Academic Standards strands: foundational skills, speaking and listening, reading, and writing.

The graphic that follows integrates the *what* (standards to be addressed), the *how* (instructional strategies), and the *where* (structures) that teachers incorporate as they plan for literacy instruction on any given day. Teachers will not use all of these instructional strategies in a single day, and the timing for each will vary based on needs. **Rather, teachers should flexibly select from multiple instructional strategies (e.g., interactive read aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, etc.) as they design a high-quality Tier I literacy block that reflects the expectations of the grade-level standards.**

ELEMENTS OF THE LITERACY BLOCK



TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE **VIGNETTE**

This vignette provides a window into the strong literacy practices in Mr. Hermann's first grade classroom. Mr. Hermann and his students are deeply immersed in a unit on the importance of trees to animals and people. The class has completed the series of lessons in week one of the unit, in which they learned about plant growth, the parts of a plant, and how plants depend on their surroundings and other livings things to meet their needs. They grew plants in their school garden, observed and charted their growth, and learned that plants need light, water, and minerals from the soil to grow. Through rich, complex texts like "From Seed to Plant" by Gail Gibbons and "Be a Friend to Trees" by Patricia Lauber, they explored the characteristics of different trees and plants including those that grow right in their neighborhood. They shared what they noticed about the plants and trees that were growing where they lived. They made sense of complex concepts like "pollination" and the various ways that seeds move from place to place, and they discussed important vocabulary words, such as "minerals," "germination," "shoot," "stem," and "bud," which support comprehension of texts on this and other related topics. In their discussions of these texts, they also explored which words the authors used to describe how plants need rain, sun, and minerals, and how those words helped the reader understand their importance to plants' development.

UNIT CONCEPTS

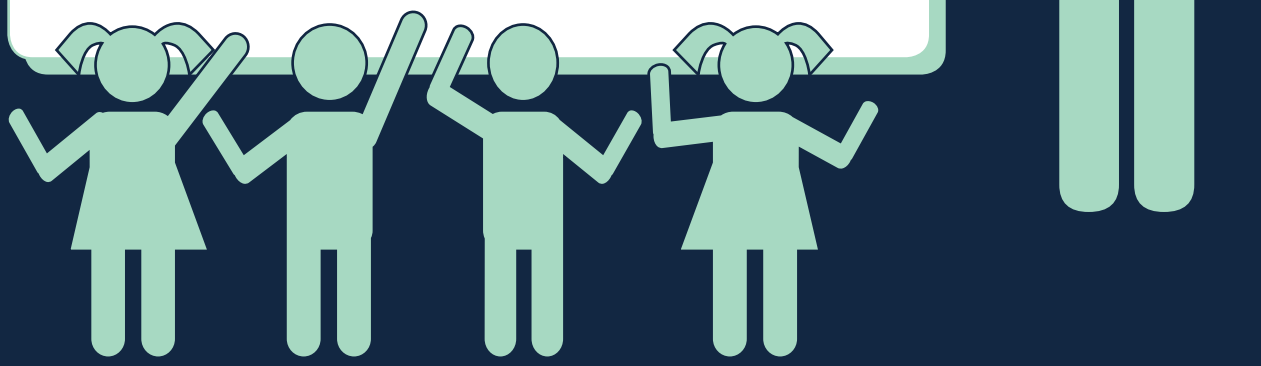
- Conservation
- Interdependence of Living Things
- Importance of Geography & Habitat

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to meet their needs and to help them grow.
- People, plants, and animals depend on each other to survive.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why do humans need to preserve trees?
- How do plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to help them live and grow?



In this unit, the ELA and Science standards for first grade are integrated in service of students' tackling the unit's essential questions and grasping the unit's enduring understandings through a series of high-quality, complex texts. The following standards support students in making meaning from those texts:

GRADE 1 ELA STANDARDS	
1.RL.KID.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
1.RL.KID.3	Using graphic organizers or including written details and illustrations when developmentally appropriate, describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
1.RL.CS.4	Identify words and phrases in stories and poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
1.RL.IKI.7	Either orally or in writing when appropriate, use illustrations and words in a text to describe its characters, setting, or events.
RI.1.5	Know and use various text features...to locate key facts or information in a text.
RF.1.2.C	Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes).
RF1.3.C	Know the final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds.
1.SL.CC.1	Participate with varied peers and adults in collaborative conversations in small or large groups about appropriate 1st grade topics and texts.
1.W.TTP.2	With prompting and support, write informative/explanatory texts, naming a topic, supplying some facts about the topic, and providing some sense of closure.
1.W.RBPK.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

GRADE 1 SCIENCE STANDARDS	
1.LS1	**From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes** 1) Recognize the structure of plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) and describe the function of the parts (taking in water and air, producing food, making new plants). 2) Illustrate and summarize the life cycle of plants. 3) Analyze and interpret data from observations to describe how changes in the environment cause plants to respond in different ways.
1.LS2	**Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics** 3) Recognize how plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to meet their needs in the places they live.

Students also had ample opportunities to write throughout the first week of the unit. During interactive writing, Mr. Hermann guided students to revisit the text "From Seed to Plant" to explain why the author, Gail Gibbons, introduced the parts of plants. Students learned the parts of plants and that each part has a function. One student pointed to the stem of a plant and said "water travels through the stem, from the roots, to the bud." In the writing station, students worked throughout the week on writing their own informative pieces about plant life. They started the week by drawing a cover and writing a title for a science notebook about how plants grow. Each day they added one page of information to their notebook, drawing and labeling a part of the plant. They followed the model of Gibbons, who explicitly illustrates and labels the parts of plants, and they wrote at least two reasons why each part is important to a plant. One student wrote that seeds "have the beginning of a plant inside" and that seeds turn into a sprout."

Now Mr. Hermann's class is in a portion of the unit that focuses on the trees and plants that grow in the rainforest. This builds on the knowledge that they have already developed and situates them in the study of how trees and plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to survive in a particular geographic location. They will also learn about the animals that are part of the ecosystem in the rainforest. Mr. Hermann knows that his students will revisit the interdependence concept when they study the consequences of environmental changes on plants and animals in second grade science. All students in Mr. Hermann's first grade class are engaged in the Tier I core instruction described in this vignette. Additionally, this integration of the science standards during the ELA block does not replace science core instruction that occurs at a different time in the day.

EARLIER THIS WEEK

Earlier this week Mr. Hermann's students learned about the trees, flowering plants, and animals that live in warm, steamy climates called rainforests. They engaged in an interactive read-aloud of the complex text "Nature's Green Umbrella" by Gail Gibbons, a shared reading of the text "If I Ran the Rain Forest" by Bonnie Worth, and watched video clips like WatchKnowLearn's "What is the Rain Forest?" These texts and resources exhibit exceptional craft, rich illustrations, and important information about the unique characteristics of rainforest trees and plants, such as trees' need for hot weather, sun, and rain. Each day at the writing station, students wrote in their science notebooks describing the parts of the rainforest and listed what these trees need to grow. Mr. Hermann's students learned about the canopy, understory, and roots of rainforest trees and explored how two of these characteristics are different from trees in their neighborhood. They also referenced maps to identify where rainforests can be found in the world. The class learned that rainforests cover a very small percentage of the earth's surface, yet are home to over half the world's animal species and provide a great deal of our oxygen. Now they are ready to explore the importance of rainforest trees and plants to these animals.

Note: The times presented for the instructional strategies in this vignette reflect the decision-making of the teacher based on learning targets and grade-level expectations. The teacher allocates time based on student needs and the research that students should be spending ample time daily in instruction that provides opportunities to learn and practice foundational skills and instruction that asks students to listen to, read, speak, and write about complex text.

TODAY

Mr. Hermann's first graders sit on the reading rug. Today they are starting the literacy block with an interactive read-aloud of "The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry.

Interactive Read-Aloud

25 MIN

Mr. Hermann sits in a chair at the front of the reading rug, holding up the big book edition of the beautifully illustrated text for his students to see. He opens the lesson by saying, "Today we are going to continue learning about how animals depend on trees in the rainforest. Our author, Lynne Cherry, has written The Great Kapok Tree to give us a reminder of the importance of trees in the rainforest."

As he reads, he pauses at strategic points to ask a carefully constructed sequence of questions that will support his students' understanding of the text and build critical content knowledge about how the rainforest animals rely on the great Kapok tree.

In the introduction to the story, the author writes, "This is the story of a community of animals that live in one such tree in the rain forest." After reading this sentence, Mr. Hermann asks his students to turn to their reading partner and share their ideas about what the word "community" means.

"It's sort of like your neighborhood," Sydney shares with her partner. "Yeah, I think it is when you like, live close together," her partner responds.

"My pastor calls our church a community," Mateo explains to his partner.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Hermann brings the group together again. "I heard some great ideas," he says. "Mateo, can you repeat what you shared about your church?"

After Mateo shares, Mr. Hermann adds, "Did anyone talk about our class as an example of a community?"

Ava and Angel raise their hands. Mr. Hermann continues: "A community is a group that lives together in the same place or comes together because they are interested in similar things. Ava, how is our class a community?" Ava responds, "Because we all want to...learn."

Mr. Hermann validates her response: "So our class is a community because we are all here to learn. Good thinking, Angel and Ava. In this book, we are reading about a community of animals that depends on the trees in the rainforest for shelter and food."

"Why had the two men come to the rainforest?" he asks next. Rosa responds, "They are going to chop the tree down."

"What in the text makes you think that?" he asks. Rosa shares, "In the picture, the first man is pointing to the tree so that the other man will know to chop it down."

"Yes, that's right. The larger man stopped and pointed to the great Kapok tree. Then he left," Mr. Hermann re-reads the words on the first page and turns to the second page, "Then the smaller man took the ax and struck the trunk of the tree." Mr. Hermann points to the illustration to call attention to the gash in the great Kapok tree.

"Throughout the story we are going to hear lots of reasons why the man should not chop down the great Kapok tree. When you hear one of these reasons, visualize the animal and why it needs the Kapok tree. After we read the text, we will refer back to gather evidence for a T-chart that we will create." Mr. Hermann has a T-chart already prepared on the easel next to where he sits. One column is labeled "Rainforest Animal" and the other is labeled "Reason to Save the Tree."

When Mr. Hermann reads the page about the boa constrictor and points to the large snake in the illustration, he briefly pauses and asks the students to turn and talk about what the author shared about the boa constrictor. Mr. Hermann listens in as students share details from the story about the boa constrictor. To confirm student thinking, Mr. Hermann brings the group back together and asks several students to share.

"Casey, did you hear a reason why the man should not chop down the great Kapok tree?" Mr. Hermann asks. "Yes," she responds. "Because the snake lives in it."

"Yes, that is one reason. Hmmm, I notice that the boa constrictor says 'generations of my ancestors have lived' in the Kapok tree." Mr. Hermann replies. He uses this as an opportunity to model the use of context clues to confirm the meaning unknown words. "It says that the ancestors 'have lived' in the tree. 'Have lived' means that this was in the past; the boa constrictor's ancestors lived in the tree in the past. So, I think he is talking about his parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. His family has lived in this tree for many, many years."

As Mr. Hermann continues to read the text, he stops at strategic points throughout, prompting students to think about the text.

"Why do the monkeys chatter to the sleeping man that 'the forest will become a desert'?" he asks. "The monkeys are worried that the man will chop down all the trees, and there will only be stumps left," Angel offers.

"Hmm...and how would that cause the rainforest to become a desert?" he asks. "Turn to your reading partner and discuss."

The pairs discuss how the tree roots will wither and die and the soil will wash away causing the forest to become a desert, applying the ideas and vocabulary they developed in their exploration of soil erosion in a previous lesson. Mr. Hermann skillfully continues the conversation, focusing on complex concepts, such as pollination and soil erosion, and details that appear in the story.

Upon the conclusion of the reading, Mr. Hermann directs his students' attention to the T-chart and references the two headings. He guides his students back through the text, focusing on specific pages of the text allowing students to name the rainforest animal and the reason each animal gives to save the tree. As students share their understanding, Mr. Hermann records their responses on the T-chart.

After reading and discussing each of the reasons offered by different animals that are recorded on the T-chart, Mr. Hermann pauses to model strategic use of inferring the main idea as a comprehension strategy his students have been practicing. "We know that if we want to determine the central idea of a story, we can ask ourselves questions about what the characters do and say, and why. So, why did the man drop his ax and walk out of the rainforest?" Mr. Hermann's asks.

The students excitedly call out, "He changed his mind." "He doesn't want to cut down the tree anymore." and "He listened to the animals about how the tree is important to them."

Mr. Hermann asks a culminating question: "Yes, he drops his ax for all those reasons. So–*why is the Kapok tree so important to the rainforest?* I want you to think for a moment, and we're going to do a think-pair-share. Ready? Why is the Kapok tree so important to the rainforest? Okay, think –"Mr. Hermann allows about 20 seconds for students to close their eyes and think, and then has them pair and share with their reading partners. He then has several students share with the whole class and charts their ideas, and he tells them they will have a chance to further develop these ideas about why trees are important in their writing task at the end of the unit.

5
VIGNETTE

Interactive Writing

25 MIN

Directing the students back to the T chart, Mr. Hermann says, "Let's think about how the author wrote "The Great Kapok Tree." She named each animal and insect and then wrote what each animal said as a reason for not cutting down the tree.

Mr. Hermann asks, "Why did the author tell us about each animal that lived in the tree?" Jessica offers, "She wanted the man to learn about all the animals and all the reasons that he should not cut down the tree." Sebastian says, "He needed to learn from many animals –birds, insects, frogs–animals like that–that they wouldn't have a place to live if he cut it down." Jayden adds, "Or that the land would become like a desert."

Mr. Hermann continues, "Yes, I noticed that the author included animals like a bird and an insect." He points to the T-chart and describes the reasons for keeping the trees in the rainforest, calling students' attention to the second column of the chart. "So, we just talked about how the animals use the Kapok tree. Last week, we labeled the parts of a plant, just like Gail Gibbons, the author of 'From Seed to Plant,' did. At the writing station this week, you will be writing like the authors of these texts, using other books about animals of the rainforest. This is called informational writing. To help us write informational

text, we have talked about the 'I can' statements in our anchor chart and how we can use them as a guide for our writing." Mr. Hermann reviews the 'I can' statements, asking for student volunteers to read each one:

- I *can* name an animal that lives in the rainforest.
- I *can* draw and label a picture of this animal.
- I *can* write two or more reasons why rainforest trees are important to the rainforest animal. I can use words such as "because" or "needs" or "also."
- I *can* write an ending.

"Let's write a piece together." Mr. Hermann references the chart paper, labeled "Informational Writing" at the top.

"Let's think of an animal or an insect that we can write about." The group comes to the consensus that they will write about a bee. Mr. Hermann says, "I will write the name of the insect at the top of my paper." Mr. Hermann writes, "The Bee," and turns to the page in the book that addresses the bee.

Several students raise their hands. "Kareena? What did you learn about the bee in the text?" Kareena replies, "The bee says 'my hive is in this Kapok tree.'"

Mr. Hermann continues: "Next, I will draw a picture of the bee living in the tree. Who can draw the bee on this paper?" As Hallie comes up to draw, Mr. Hermann reminds her that this drawing for the writing they do together can be simple. "Thank you, Hallie. What text will match our drawing? And how do you want to say it?" Students offer several suggestions, and agree on 'The black and yellow bee lives in the Kapok tree.' Michael writes the text.

"Now I need to write a reason the bee lives in the tree. Why does the bee live in the tree? What did you hear? Remember to look at the T-chart." Sarah looks at the chart, but also looks at the page about the bee in the big book and replies, "The bee says, 'my hive is in this Kapok tree.'" Mr. Hermann says, "Yes, he does. I like how you referred to both our chart and the text, Sarah. Remember, we want to be sure to write a complete sentence that says something about why the bee builds its hive in this tree. What could I write for my sentence?" Students offer various responses, and he leads them to consensus on: "The bee builds its home in the Kapok tree because one of its limbs is a good place for his hive." He explains: "Notice that I used the word 'because' just before my reason."

"When you do your own writing, you will be doing something a little different. You will not use 'The Great Kapok Tree' for your information about the animal you choose. You will use other books, and write at least two facts about the animal, or two reasons the animal lives where it does."

Mr. Hermann continues with the interactive writing: "What can we write for our ending?" Students suggest, "The bee is happy with his home in the tree," and Eloise writes that ending. Eloise spells *happy* h-a-p-p-e-e. The teacher notes that "*happee* ends in the long 'e' sound. However, in this word, the long 'e' sound is spelled with a 'y'." He quickly covers the 'ee' with correction tape and adds a 'y', saying, "Good use of your knowledge about long 'e', Eloise."

"Let's look at our 'I can' chart. Did we follow each step?" With the class, he checks each of these steps carefully and reminds them that they will follow these same steps in their own writing. Mr. Hermann also tells them that they will be following the peer revising and editing steps once they finish their piece, as well, which they have practiced several times before.

Finally, Mr. Hermann calls their attention to an enduring understanding that is stated explicitly on the page of the book about the bee, and that is reinforced, though not as explicitly, throughout the text: "You see, '*all living things depend on one another.*' We're going to be talking more about this idea, and you'll really be talking and writing more about it **in second grade**."

Before transitioning to the foundational skills lesson, Mr. Hermann further sets them up for the writing station: "So we just learned about the animals listed on the T-chart when we read 'The Great Kapok Tree.' Remember how we've talked about the differences between literary and informational text? "The Great Kapok Tree" is a literary text–it is a story, but it also contains real information about the trees and the animals of the rainforest. At the writing station, you will be looking at *informational* texts about many other animals that live in the rainforest. There are books about animals that live in the rainforest, such as spider monkeys and chimpanzees. We've also studied other animals of the rainforest in other texts. Ask yourself which other animals you want to learn more about. Which of these could you write about? When you do your informational writing, choose an animal that interests you. Learn more about it, so that you can write interesting information about it. Look in the text and at our charts for words you can use in your writing."

Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction

15 MIN

Next, Mr. Hermann transitions to explicit instruction on the next skill in the phonics scope and sequence that his school follows. He directs his students to return to their desks as he writes two words from "The Great Kapok Tree" on the white board: "tree" and "heat."

"What vowel sound do you hear in the words 'tree' and 'heat'?" he asks. "The long /e/," his class responds in chorus.

Mr. Hermann invites his class to brainstorm other words that have the long /e/ sound. He adds each of these words to the white board, making sure that there are several examples of the long /e/ spellings: -ee and -ea. A few students identify words with other spellings for the long /e/ sound, including "people" and "silently." Mr. Hermann writes these words in a different color and explains that they will focus on those spellings another day.

Mr. Hermann explains that these words have different vowel teams for the same sound. He models the process of finding the long /e/ spelling inside each word, using a marker to underline the -ee or -ea spellings within each word.

Next he directs his students to the word cards on their tables. The students

work with each other to complete a word sort in which they read the words to first determine if it has a long /e/ sound, and if so, sort the words in a 2-column chart according to which spelling (-ee or -ea) they contain.

Mr. Hermann summarizes the lesson by saying, "These two vowel patterns (ee and ea) make the long 'e' sound. As we read our next text, "Trees Help", let's be word detectives and look for these patterns in words."

Shared Reading

20 MIN

Next Mr. Hermann asks his students to pull out their copy of "Trees Help" by Angela Rios from their book bags. Mr. Hermann has selected this text for shared reading because it is connected to his content goals for this unit, but it is also controlled to emphasize the two different spellings for the long /e/ vowel sound that they are practicing. Because this text is part of an intentional scope and sequence, it also contains primarily other phonics skills that students have already mastered. His class echo reads together and then choral reads the text. Again, Mr. Hermann pauses at strategic points to ask comprehension questions about the important concepts in the text. While the main purpose of this shared reading is for students to practice their newly-acquired phonics skill, he also must ensure his students are making sense of what they are reading as it relates to how people, plants, and animals depend on each other to live. For this reason, he revisits the section of the text "How Do Trees Help People?" and has students read a sentence with a partner.

"Why do people depend on trees to live?" Mr. Hermann asks. "Turn and talk to your partner to share your ideas."

"Trees give us food to eat." Jessica shares. "And trees help make the air we breathe by, um...letting air out of their leaves," her partner responds. Mr. Hermann notices that there is still some confusion around this concept and notes that he needs to adjust the plan for tomorrow to dive more deeply into how trees produce oxygen. He also asks Kyle if he heard any other ways that trees help people. "They can use the wood for their homes and for toys...my apartment building is not made of wood, but I do have a toy made of wood—a yo-yo."

Mr. Hermann steers back to the text: "That's right, Kyle. Homes can be made of different materials, including wood, which we get from trees."

After they finish reading the book, Mr. Hermann tells his students that they are going to be word detectives. He asks his students to read through the text again but this time on their own. As they do this they should look for all the words in the text that have the long /e/ sound and write them on their desks with a dry erase marker.

As students complete this activity independently, Mr. Hermann walks around the room noting students' correct choices or their mistakes in his anecdotal notes about their progress. He will use this information to determine groupings for further practice with this phonics skill later in the unit.

Small Group Reading

Next, Mr. Hermann previews what his students will be doing during small group reading and prompts students to efficiently transition to their stations. Each student rotates through three different activities for 20 minutes at a time; some students will visit three independent stations during this hour. Most students will work in two independent stations, plus 20 minutes of teacher-led, small-group instruction with Mr. Hermann, during which he provides targeted support in specific areas of need. The groups are flexible in membership and formed based on decisions Mr. Hermann makes using formal and informal assessment data.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY 1: FLUENCY STATION

The students selected for the fluency station listen to an audio recording of "Let's Go to the Rainforest" by Fiona Kenshole. On the first read, the students listen attentively to the fluent reader and follow along in their heads and in a copy of the text, which they track with craft sticks. On the second read, they whisper read independently along with the recording. Finally, on the third read, students whisper read in pairs without the recording, focusing on reading at an appropriate pace, reading words and punctuation accurately, and reading with appropriate expression. If they finish, they can select another text on rainforest animals and plants from a bin at the fluency station or reread the familiar text first independently, then to a partner. They can also choose to reread "Trees Help."

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY 2: INDEPENDENT READING STATION

The classroom library is full of texts about the trees, animals, and people in a variety of habitats and ecosystems. Mr. Hermann does not insist that students read at their "independent" or "instructional" level. Instead, he allows student choice to be guided by their interest and the topics they are studying as a class. For example, when students have a special interest in and knowledge about a topic, he has found students can read above what they might typically be able to read on their own. Jayden and Sarah have lower reading levels but have a particularly strong interest in the rainforest and have a lot of background knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation to read about it. For this reason, Mr. Hermann has suggested that they tackle the non-fiction text "Food for Life: Rainforest" by Kate Riggs (330L) collaboratively. Students record ideas and wonderings from their reading in their reading journals. Mr. Hermann plans to conference with the students later in the week to discuss what they learned from the texts they read during independent reading.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY 3: WRITING STATION

At the writing station, students work in their notebooks on the writing task modeled with the whole class earlier in the lesson. To support their inquiry and research about rainforest animals, there are several books about animals that live in the rainforest, such as tree frogs and spider monkeys from the "Animals of the Amazon Rainforest" series by Katie Gillespie,

and "Chimpanzees" by Helen Frost. Many of the rainforest animals in these texts are included in "The Great Kapok Tree," but some are not. Students choose one animal from one of these texts and use the "I can" statements as a guide as they write their informative texts. When they finish their writing, at the end of their time at this station or the next day, students will refer to three additional statements for peer revising and editing. In pairs, students read their writing aloud to partners and ensure they have used the anchor charts and texts—and even their peers—as resources for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The statements are included in this checklist at the writing station:

WRITING

- ☑ I named an animal that lives in the rainforest.
- ☑ I drew and labeled a picture of this animal.
- ☑ I wrote two or more reasons why rainforest trees are important to this animal. I used words such as "because" or "needs" or "also."
- ☑ I wrote an ending.

PEER REVISING AND EDITING

- ☑ I read my writing to a friend.
- ☑ I made decisions for which words I might change.
- ☑ I checked my spelling using the books and charts.
- ☑ I used capital letters and periods in my sentences.

Students will also share what they learned from these texts and what they wrote when they conference with Mr. Hermann, using the rubric that he and his first-grade team developed.

TEACHER-LED GROUP 1

Using multiple sources of evidence, Mr. Hermann has determined that five of the students in his class need some additional practice with the final plural consonant "s," distinguishing when it makes the /s/ sounds versus the /z/ sound. He has these students sit at the kidney table during the first rotation, starting with a mini-lesson on this skill. Mr. Hermann then gives each student a picture card with a word ending in the plural "s" on it. He models with two cards of his own ("plants" and "animals"), categorizing each word by its ending sound, /s/ or /z/ in a two-column chart on a small white board. Each student reads his or her word to the group and categorizes it in the chart by its ending sound, writing the word in dry-erase marker on the chart. Mr. Hermann then tells the students they will re-read a text that he had used for shared reading in a previous lesson, "Places Plants and Animals Live" by Katie Knight. This text is connected to the content goals for the unit and emphasizes the targeted phonics skill. The students whisper read the book as Mr. Hermann listens in to provide support and coaching on the final "s" sound in words like "animals" (/z/) and "plants" (/s/). He pauses at strategic points to ask basic comprehension questions, like "What does the author say that 'plains' are like?" (grassy and flat), and "How are oceans similar to rainforests?" (They are both wet, which is explicitly stated about the rainforest.) Students repeat the word detective task, finding and sorting the words in this text by the final /s/ sound and final /z/ sound.

TEACHER-LED GROUP 2

Using an oral reading fluency assessment which provides quantitative data on rate, Mr. Hermann has identified that seven of his students need fluency support. He also gathered additional qualitative data on their fluency needs and decided to support these students in phrasing and expression. During the second rotation, Mr. Hermann pulls these students to the kidney table for targeted fluency support. He has selected "Animal Homes" by Karen Kennery, the shared reading text from last week, to support students' fluency practice. Students begin by choral reading the text together and Mr. Hermann stops at certain points to have students echo read with a focus on phrasing. He stops at several spots in the text where the "ee" and "ea" pattern are used. Mr. Herman draws attention to the pattern saying, "What do you notice about this word?" Students are then asked to partner read the text and provide their partner with feedback on their phrasing and expression, such as, "I noticed that you asked that sentence like a question when you saw the question mark. Great job!" or "Try that again. That's a phrase that could go together."

TEACHER-LED GROUP 3

For the third rotation, Mr. Hermann has identified a group of students who have strong decoding skills and oral reading fluency but struggle with comprehension. As he listened to his students read, Mr. Hermann noticed that these students seemed to struggle to make meaning of figurative language and specific vocabulary. During this small-group lesson, Mr. Hermann tells students they will be learning more about the plants and animals of the rainforest by reading "Rain Forest" by Helen Cowcher (550L). He first does a picture walk with students to introduce them to the animals on each page, since the names of those animals are, in part, what makes this book complex. Mr. Hermann pays particular attention to the illustration with the fierce-looking jaguar, asking "What do you think the author and illustrator might be trying to make the reader feel with this picture?" Students choral read the text, and Mr. Hermann stops them to display a sentence he has written on sentence strips: "A strange scent floated on the wind, causing the Blue Morph butterflies to flutter higher among the treetops." With these students, he unpacks the figurative language, anticipating that the connection between the strange scent and the butterflies is likely to be confusing. He also attends to the word "flutter," and asks students to show him what the word means. When Arturo gently flaps his arms, the other students in the group do, too.

Once he is satisfied with their comprehension of this sentence, he calls their attention to the next one: "The macaws, too, sensed something sinister in the air." While these students were able to decode the words "macaw" and "sinister" during the choral reading, Mr. Hermann anticipates that they might have difficulty with the meanings of these words, which are critical to understanding the rising action in this text. Students glean from the illustration that a macaw is a bird, but Mr. Hermann needed to provide some examples of sinister events (e.g., reminding them of evil actions of the wicked stepmother in the Cinderella stories they had read previously) and defining the sinister actions in these events. He then is explicit as he defines the word, saying "something bad is happening."

Next, Mr. Hermann helps students make sense of a couple of sentences toward the end of the book that relate back to the concept of how animals depend on trees and the sinister events that are developing. "'Jaguar was the most powerful creature in the rain forest. But something even more powerful was threatening their world.' What is happening on this page when we see the machines have come, and that the dirt is torn up?" Sam says, "The machines are there to cut down the trees." An intentional sequence of questions, attending to figurative language and vocabulary, and the connections between ideas, helps lead the students in this small group to the enduring understanding in this text and connect it to the concept as developed in "The Great Kapok Tree" and other texts in the unit.

LATER THIS WEEK

Later this week Mr. Hermann will re-read "The Great Kapok Tree," focusing on the ways the author describes the setting of the rainforest in her introduction, focusing specifically on the words and phrases she uses to appeal to the senses. Students watch video clips about deforestation in an additional independent station to consider the impact deforestation can have on rainforest animals. Students will also complete the additional stations they did not get to visit in this lesson. Having students complete these activities to deepen their knowledge and to practice reading will also allow Mr. Hermann to conference with individual students (approximately 3 minutes per student once or twice this week) about their writing and their comprehension. Next week, they will read and write about quality texts, such as "Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa," by Jeanette Winter, to learn more about the importance of conservation on another continent as they move toward their culminating task for the unit.

TO CONCLUDE THE UNIT

Mr. Hermann will have his students grappling with the essential questions for this unit by collaboratively working in small groups to create a poster in response to the prompt: "Why do humans need to preserve trees?" They are reminded to go back to their charts developed for "The Great Kapok Tree" about why trees are important, their science notebooks, and their daily informational writing tasks. Students use evidence from multiple texts to support their conclusions. Mr. Hermann tells his students that he will display these posters in the hallway so that his class can inform the other students and adults in their school about the role of trees in maintaining earth's ecosystems.

In the four think aloud segments that follow, Mr. Hermann reflects on the process of designing this unit.

Think Aloud 1: Text Selection

1

The first-grade teacher team at my school began planning this unit by identifying the knowledge we wanted students to develop. This unit focused on building critical content knowledge about plant growth and the interdependence of plants, animals, and humans, which is connected to the Grade 1 science standards. We mapped week-by-week how the enduring

understandings will be addressed and what we wanted students to take away from in-depth study of the concept.

Last week, our lessons focused on how trees grow and how they depend on their surroundings to survive, both concepts drawn from the Grade 1 science standards. From this series of lessons, students better understand that trees are plants; trees grow from seeds; there are many kinds of trees in our neighborhood; and, in this country, some trees provide food; trees in our neighborhood have roots, trunks, branches, and leaves; trees prevent erosion and keep water that is needed for the trees to live and produce food; and trees provide shelter for birds, animals, and people.

This week our enduring understandings are focused on the interdependence of trees, people, and animals and the unique characteristics of rainforest trees in the ecosystem. After these lessons, students will better understand that trees in the rainforest have certain characteristics, and that they need sun, water, and minerals to survive, thereby reinforcing these Grade 1 science standards. They will also have begun to grasp how trees help people and animals, equipping them with knowledge they will revisit when they study ecosystems in Grade 2 science.

Next week our enduring understandings are focused on conservation, including the concepts that trees depend on their surroundings and living things to survive, and that students themselves can protect and defend the rainforest and other ecosystems. The value of organizing our units around concepts is that our students have repeated opportunities to study complex and worthwhile topics, ideas, arguments, and vocabulary. Research indicates that prolonged engagement in conceptual development is the most efficient way to build vocabulary and world knowledge, which supports text comprehension.

I worked closely with the school librarian and other Grade 1 teachers at my school to select a set of high-quality texts on these topics at varying levels of complexity for different instructional purposes. My students need opportunities to develop and practice their foundational skills in texts that they can decode independently or with limited support from me. They also need opportunities to build knowledge and robust vocabularies by listening to rich, complex texts that I read aloud, and that they read with teacher guidance in shared and small group reading. In independent reading, they get practice with both aspects—practicing automaticity and fluency and making meaning from text on their own. It is important that I make time in the schedule for my students to engage in instruction that targets both reading foundational skills and reading and listening comprehension.

I flexibly use a variety of content-specific instructional strategies to meet these goals for student learning. Here is how I chose the texts that are featured in my lesson today:

INTERACTIVE READ ALOUD

I selected "The Great Kapok Tree" because it exposes my students to complex sentence structure, academic vocabulary, and concepts that cannot be found in the types of texts that they can read on their own. With a Lexile of 670, this text falls in the Grade 2-3 grade band. Most of the texts

that we read aloud in Grade 1 should be in the 2-3 band, or even the 4-5 grade band and are much more complex than what the students can read themselves. This text is richly illustrated, contains lots of tier 2 vocabulary like “ancestors,” as well as domain specific words like “canopy” and “underbrush,” and has an important message about how living things are dependent on each other to survive. It has been named an NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book for Children, an American Bookseller's Association "Pick of the Lists," and an International Reading Association Teacher's Choice.

INTERACTIVE WRITING

Writing instruction is an integral part of my literacy block; students have daily opportunities to write. Sometimes they write to support reading comprehension; sometimes they write to demonstrate it; and sometimes they write to practice writers’ craft. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes as students learn about the way texts work, how words are formed, how ideas are expressed, how authors convey meaning and draw attention to important concepts, and how language conventions enhance a text. The goal for writing instruction is for students to generate pieces of writing to express their ideas as they construct new knowledge about content and about the craft of texts. The writing instruction for this week focuses on students’ ability to communicate information about animals that inhabit the rainforest and how they depend on the rainforest trees. They are also learning about the author’s craft when reading “The Great Kapok Tree,” a literary text. Informational texts at the writing station provide additional models, often called mentor texts, to illustrate author’s craft. These mentor texts provide explicit characteristics of informational texts: stating main idea and supporting facts, providing illustrations for further elaboration of content, and labels or captions to explain or summarize what is illustrated.

At the writing station, students are involved in inquiry writing. They are doing research with texts and charts available, choosing animals for their writing, following the structure of the “I can” chart, and using rubrics to check their writing. During the week, students also read to their partners and edit and revise to complete their pieces. I don’t want them to get tripped up on spelling, but at the same time, I want them to use the texts and anchor charts we’ve developed that I have displayed around the room to check spelling where they can. I also don’t want the peer revising and editing to be a superficial experience, so we have practiced the skill of listening to classmates read their writing and giving them a couple of pieces of feedback that will make their writing clearer.

In my modeled writing instruction tomorrow, I will choose a second informational book to show my students how to go to books as sources for deeper information. I’d typically choose a nonfiction text that is more detailed – with illustrations, captions, and blocks of text about bees or whichever animal is to be featured in the demonstration lesson. This allows me to show my students how you use books as resources for information for their writing, and to point out how we can use certain features of nonfiction text, such as the table of contents or headings, to help us find that information. “The Great Kapok Tree,” being a literary text, has only some information about the animals, but students can learn that we seek

out other books for more detailed facts to support our inquiries. Using secondary resource texts also reinforces what they'll do in the independent stations and small group reading. I explicitly point out my reading and research processes for using informational text, like looking up an animal's name or the features of a plant in the table of contents or index, and looking for unknown words in the glossary.

SHARED READING

I spend time every day explicitly teaching students foundational literacy skills; it is important for my students to practice using their new skills decoupled from text and then to practice their new skills in a text they can decode. We focused on two different spellings for the long /e/ vowel sound today because we are following the research-based scope and sequence in our district-wide curriculum that is aligned with our state standards. This curriculum builds from the simplest to the most complex skills, teaching high-utility skills before less useful sound spellings, at a pace of instruction that ensures a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Today I used shared reading to provide my students with an authentic opportunity to practice the skill they just learned. I considered several factors in my selection of the text "Trees Help" by Angela Rios. Most importantly, many of the words in this text are decodable based on the sound spellings that I have already taught in our phonics scope and sequence. In addition, the text emphasizes the different spellings for the long /e/ vowel sound, which students are currently learning. I use choral reading, echo reading, and partner reading to support their reading of this text and call attention to the new spelling-sound patterns. Students also independently read aloud portions of the selected text. I use a mix of appropriately complex text that requires my students to use all three cueing systems—graphophonic (the letter-sound or sound-symbol relationships of language), syntactic (word order, rules and patterns of language, and punctuation), and semantic (meaning in language that assists in comprehension).

Additionally, "Trees Help" is focused on the same concepts we are developing in this unit and gives my students another opportunity to deepen and refine their thinking about trees and revisit words to build robust vocabularies. I am often limited by the texts I have access to at my school and finding a text that emphasizes the targeted phonics skill AND helps to build student knowledge and vocabulary in connection to the concepts is not always possible. When I find a text like this, it feels more connected.

SMALL GROUP READING

I use my small group reading time to engage my students in reading appropriately challenging texts that will give them an opportunity to practice decoding, fluency, and comprehension. While I select texts specifically for each purpose, they should always lend themselves to helping students make meaning of what they're reading. By grouping students flexibly and selecting texts according to the goals of the lesson, I can respond to students' specific needs, which may change over time, so they can meet grade-level expectations. There are three main reasons why my students might be struggling to making meaning from texts they read, each with a different implication for the texts I choose.

DECODING: Some of my students need additional practice with foundational reading skills that have already been taught. For today's lesson, I had identified that five of my students were struggling with the final consonant "s." To support this group of students, I decided to revisit a text that we had read together during shared reading in a previous lesson – "Places Plants and Animals Live" by Katie Knight. This text is connected to the concepts in this unit, albeit not as tightly. It does contain a spread of two pages on the rainforest, but ideally, I would have found another text primarily on the rainforest that students could read independently, so that they could practice the phonics skill while continuing to build knowledge about the concept. However, I could not find a text that satisfied both criteria, so I made a tradeoff and selected a text that intentionally included many words with the final "s" spelling and its /s/ and /z/ sound correspondences. While decoding is the primary challenge for this group of students, I also use this as an opportunity to model comprehension strategies, deepen understanding of the text and topic, and provide repeated exposure to important vocabulary words.

FLUENCY: Some of my students are strong decoders but still struggle to read fluently, which holds them back from successful comprehension. As sentences become more complex, students need to read in meaningful, connected phrases to make sense of what they are reading. These students read word-by-word, lack expressive interpretation, and tend to read excessively slow. A couple of my students also read with excessive speed, ignoring punctuation and other phrase boundaries, with little or no expression. Both groups of students benefit from lots of opportunities to listen to fluent reading modeled. Today I supported these students to collaboratively re-read a text we used for shared reading last week: "Animal Homes" by Karen Kennery (410L). We then echo read to practice phrasing and reinforce some of the earlier knowledge and vocabulary they developed from this text. I drew attention to how phrases make sense when read as a phrase instead of word-by-word. This helps my students make the connection between reading fluently and making meaning from text.

COMPREHENSION: A few of my students who are strong decoders and can read fluently struggle with comprehension. In most cases, they lack the knowledge and vocabulary needed to make sense of what they are reading, complex sentence structure (and in this case, figurative language) trips them up, or they struggle with a particular comprehension strategy. I use small group time to build knowledge and vocabulary, unpack complex sentence structure, and/or practice comprehension strategies using complex text. Today we used this time to unpack complex sentences in the text "Rain Forest." While this text is quantitatively a bit high for first graders to read independently (550L), upon analyzing it qualitatively and for reader considerations, I discovered it was primarily the names of some rainforest animals that drove up the Lexile level. With some attention to those animal names during the picture walk, I knew this text could be accessible to this group of students. The complexity of the text provided an opportunity to hone in on complex sentences. We first read the sentence aloud a few times, and then I focused their attention on the complex parts of the sentence, inviting them to figure out the connection between the scent on the wind and the butterflies. This helps them unpack the information and the imagery that they encounter in connected text. Word meaning must be understood in the context of the phrases and clauses in which they are used. This gives my students more practice accessing complex text that is critically important to their ability to read independently and proficiently.

When my students are not engaged in reading with me at the kidney table, they are working at one of the other three stations: independent reading, fluency, or writing. Most students complete two of these three stations, in addition to small group reading with me, each day. My students need regular, daily practice with a range of texts and benefit greatly from self-guided exploration of text. I guide their reading selections to enhance connections to the concepts being addressed in the unit–in this case, the importance of trees to animals and people in a variety of habitats. I try to provide texts at a range of complexity levels that I know my students can read independently, but I don't hold them to a specific "instructional or independent level." I know that what they can read on their own varies based on their interest in the topic, the knowledge and vocabulary they bring to the text, and the specific elements of complexity present within the text.

Think Aloud 2: Assessment

2

I use information about student learning to make decisions about how to group my students and to adjust my lesson plans to address my students' needs. A variety of assessment data sources informed decisions I made about today's lesson:

ASSESSMENT OF ORAL READING FLUENCY

I assess regularly each of my students' accuracy and fluency when reading. I use assessments, such as running records, to help me determine which students need additional support with decoding and which might just need additional fluency practice. This evidence helps me differentiate my small group instruction so my students spend time on the skills they are working to acquire and not those they have already mastered. For example, in a recent assessment of accuracy, I realized that some of my students were mispronouncing the final "s" sounds when it makes the plural. That is why I used my small group time to review this skill and provide additional practice opportunities.

ASSESSMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION

As one way to assess my students' reading comprehension, I listen carefully and take notes daily throughout the different instructional strategies of interactive read aloud, shared reading, and/or small group reading. This is how I monitor students' progress toward being able to comprehend grade-level literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. When my students struggle, I look at each text individually and think about where they may have struggled with comprehension: was it decoding, knowledge, vocabulary, sentence structure, passage length, or something else? What I learn helps me think about whether I need to select different or additional texts for my conceptual unit, or use the texts I have already selected and hone in on specific elements, such as sentence structure, either as a whole class or in small groups. For this reason, we tackled the complex sentences in "Rain Forest."

DAILY AND UNIT LEVEL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

The most useful data I have is what I learn from reading with individual students in my teacher-led small groups and from my

students' responses during interactive read aloud and on daily and unit writing tasks. I triangulate this with my formal assessment data to more effectively diagnose students' struggles and provide additional support, whether with decoding, fluency, or the aspects that often lead to comprehension challenges like sentence structure, sentence and paragraph length, knowledge demands, and vocabulary. I used these data sources to inform my groupings for small group reading today. For writing, I want to allow students to both fully express and develop their ideas and to attend to language structures. To ensure students do both, we use the "I can" statements and student-friendly checklist that includes the peer editing steps as a guide to the writing process. We've practiced using this list all year, and I use a version of it to evaluate their writing. My first-grade colleagues and I developed the rubric based on the Grade 1 Writing standards, as well as on the TCAP Grade 2 Holistic Writing Rubric, knowing that next year our students must craft at least three well written sentences of varying lengths, using evidence from text, with grammatical accuracy, to receive the highest possible score of a 5 on the writing portion of the grade 2 assessment.

Think Aloud 3: Questions & Tasks

When planning instruction around a rich anchor text like "The Great Kapok Tree," I follow a series of steps:

1. I identify the key takeaway from the text–which helps develop the key concepts of the unit;
2. I plan a daily writing task that will tell me if students got the key takeaway (and will allow them to practice writing skills that I will model, both for today's task and for the culminating unit task);
3. I plan a sequence of questions that will support them to make sense of the complex features in the text and support comprehension of the key idea; and
4. I determine my instructional strategies.

So I first ask myself what they key takeaway is and how this takeaway will support their understanding of the concepts for this unit and build their text comprehension. For example, is there key content knowledge I want them to learn about the conditions that support the growth of plants and trees and how people and animals depend on trees? Is there a particularly complex idea or relationship in the text that I want them to analyze? Does the author employ specific language features to convey information about the relationship between people, animals, and trees? In today's lesson, I wanted my students to understand **how animals depend on rainforest trees and plants in a particular environment–the rainforest**. Rich texts like "The Great Kapok Tree" have limitless complex features that might be worthy of student time and attention, so I make sure to focus my analysis on the specific features that will help my students arrive at the essential understandings that I have identified for today's lesson.

I make sure these daily writing tasks reflect the depth of the grade-level ELA standards and ultimately lead to a culminating unit task–the poster–that is focused on synthesis of the analysis that they have done across multiple texts within the unit. While the culminating task is primarily focused on a

writing standard, it allows my students to activate several reading standards to demonstrate their learning. In the culminating unit task my students will synthesize their learning across days and texts to explain why trees are important for animals and people and what happens when trees are destroyed. With the writing task for this lesson, I want them to write about how various animals use trees in the rainforest so that they can see how trees are essential to many living things in this, and eventually in all, environments.

Once I've determined how I want my students to demonstrate their learning from "The Great Kapok Tree," I consider where they may struggle on the learning path. I conduct an analysis of the text using a Qualitative Complexity Rubric to identify the features in the text that are complex and yet critical to arriving at the essential understandings in the reading and writing tasks. To deeply understand the different reasons the animals give for saving the Kapok tree, I determined that my students need to apply some previous conceptual knowledge and tackle some of the complex language demands in this text. Specifically, they need to apply their previous learning around the concepts of pollination and soil erosion and continue to refine their understanding of how trees release oxygen.

The next thing I do is plan a sequence of text-specific questions that will require students to think deeply about these complex features, the words that matter most for comprehension, and the understandings that will help them be successful on the daily task. For example, I asked them to consider the words "community" and "ancestors," both of which are critical to understanding how the animals in the story depend on the great Kapok tree. We also collaboratively recorded each animal's reason for saving the tree, prompting them to attend to these critical elements and apply their previous learning around pollination, soil erosion, and how trees produce oxygen to make sense of what they are reading. I give my students time to make sense of these elements through discussion. To ensure my students get to deep understanding of the text, questions require students to search for and use information within the text, think critically about the text, and make connections beyond the text. The sequence of questions follows the sequence of the text and doesn't always build from literal to inferential to evaluative. I do, however, make sure that questions help students make sense of what the text says literally and inferentially and require them to analyze and evaluate the text more deeply. Intentionally sequenced questions provide me with evidence of students' comprehension and of areas where they may be confused.

So within the lesson as a whole, I am deliberate in planning the instructional strategies that I will use to strengthen my students' speaking and listening skills and support them to take ownership of their own learning. For the most important questions my students need to understand for comprehension, I use a turn-and-talk or think-pair-share, so they have time to process and discuss with

a peer before sharing with the larger class. By processing orally with a partner, they will also be more prepared to share with the larger group and, later, to read and write on their own. There is an additional benefit to these opportunities for students to process and talk to make their thinking visible: they provide me with informal assessment information on areas I need to clarify, revisit, or delve into more deeply. For those questions that are less critical and just a check on comprehension, I take individual responses. I am working on letting my students respond to each other, rather than me always responding to each individual student. To do that, I must teach them how to agree with, disagree with, or build on what their classmates are saying. They are getting better at doing this independently, but I still have to prompt them sometimes.

Think Aloud 4: Reflection on the Lesson

4

The essential understandings in today's lesson build on previous learning my students have done around the scientific concepts of pollination, soil erosion, and how trees produce oxygen. I noticed during the read-aloud and writing activities that many of my students are struggling to integrate information across texts and, more specifically, many struggled to connect the ideas of how trees produce oxygen to why trees are important to people and animals. I am planning to revise tomorrow's lesson plan to include another informational text and a video clip to explore oxygen production more deeply before we re-read "The Great Kapok Tree" to consider the impact deforestation can have on rainforest animals.

During shared reading, I also noticed that a few of my students struggled to identify the words in the text that have the long /e/ sound. I will bring these students together for some additional instruction and practice using the text "Trees Help" by Angela Rios during small group reading tomorrow.

See references 37-54 for all resources used in vignette.

INSTRUCTIONAL DECISIONS

In designing units and lessons that will ensure students reach literacy proficiency, teachers need to make intentional and strategic decisions. Teachers draw on their professional knowledge for making decisions **before**, **during**, and **after** instruction.

SECTION

6 Before Instruction: Planning for the Unit

7 During Instruction: Key Practices

8 After Instruction: Reflection

TEAM Connection

In the following sections, these boxes will indicate where instructional decisions connect with the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM).

BEFORE INSTRUCTION: PLANNING FOR THE UNIT

The literacy unit design framework outlines specific considerations for teachers as they plan for units of study. Literacy units are made up of a variety of texts, instructional strategies, and standard-aligned tasks to support students in gaining understanding of a concept(s). The length of the unit may vary depending on the concepts and enduring understandings.

CONCEPTS

What concept(s) will be the focus of my unit?

A unit of study is planned around a concept(s) that allows students the opportunity to investigate, build, and share disciplinary knowledge and understanding aligned to academic standards[11]. Concepts require students to develop factual knowledge as well as conceptual understandings as they gain knowledge about the world. Concepts are different than topics in that they represent universal knowledge that can be applied in various contexts. They are timeless and transferrable across content areas and grade levels[23].

TEAM Connection
Instructional Plans indicator on Planning Rubric

For example, rainforests is a topic, whereas interdependence is a concept that could be applied to rainforests and their ecosystems. The concept of interdependence can be applied to how plants and animals in the rainforest are dependent on each other. The concept of interdependence could also be applied to humans and their environment and humans with their local or global economies.

It is important for teachers to consider their students and the content they need to know. Using the Tennessee Academic Standards as an anchor, teachers should derive concepts from all content areas, including science, social studies, and fine arts. While this focus should not replace content area instruction, these standards serve as a foundation for the concepts around which teachers build conceptual knowledge.

Topic	Concept
Sun, Fossils, Wind	Energy
George Washington, Abraham Lincoln	Patriotism
Life Cycle	Change
Fairy Tales	Conflict

In the introductory paragraphs of the vignette, Mr. Hermann lays out the concepts that were to be addressed during the unit: conservation, interdependence of living things, and the importance of geography and habitat.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What enduring understanding(s) will be the focus within the unit?

TEAM Connection
Instructional Plans indicator on Planning Rubric

In addition to using a concept to anchor unit design, teachers identify enduring understandings to bring focus and priorities to the unit.[33] **Enduring understandings emphasize what students should understand, not just recall, as a result of studying the concept of the unit.** The enduring understandings are central to the unit design and serve as a guide for the lesson sequences that progress students to recognize, draw, and verify conclusions.[23, 33, 35]

Mr. Hermann used the concepts of the unit to identify the following enduring understandings:

- Plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to meet their needs and help them grow.
- People, plants, and animals depend on each other to survive.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

What essential questions will students need to answer to develop this enduring understanding?

Essential questions are open-ended questions that provoke students to draw the conclusions needed to gain the enduring understanding. As teachers plan for instruction, crafting essential questions can assist teachers in designing learning experiences that promote inquiry during the unit. Essential questions are reflective of authentic, real-world questions students might ask themselves, rather than questions only asked in school. They are used to make the learning meaningful and relevant. Essential questions can be used to sequence lessons over time with corresponding daily tasks that build in complexity towards the end-of-unit task.[23, 33, 34]

Mr. Hermann's essential questions for the unit are:

- How do plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to help them live and grow?
- Why do humans need to preserve trees?

Notice in the vignette, the enduring understandings and essential questions require the application of several science and ELA standards in order to formulate the answers over time.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

TEXT SELECTION

Which texts will support my students in gaining this knowledge?

TEAM Connection
Instructional Plans indicator on Planning Rubric

Texts provide the vehicle for knowledge building around the enduring understandings, and they also inform the higher levels of thought needed to respond to the essential questions. Texts that are worthy of students' time and

attention are purposefully selected based on their quantitative and qualitative text complexity, as well as considerations of the student and task. To ensure selected texts are at an appropriate level of text complexity, teachers must consider the following three-part model:

- **Qualitative dimensions of text complexity** are measured by multiple levels of meaning, irregular text structures, unconventional language, and other stylistic features that require the reader to read closely and think critically.
- **Quantitative dimensions of text complexity** are measured by word length or frequency and sentence length. Software programs, such as the Lexile leveling system, measure quantitative complexity.
- **Reader and task considerations** must be considered in addition to the two measures above. Variables specific to readers include student interest, background knowledge, and culture. When considering tasks, experiences, purpose, grouping structure, and complexity of the task all play an important role.[30, 32]

A teacher should develop a text set based on the concept selected. A text set is a collection of related texts organized around a concept or line of inquiry. Text sets are built by considering the level of text *and* the instructional strategy through which the text will be used (e.g., interactive read aloud, shared reading, small group reading, independent reading, or explicit foundational skills instruction, etc.). The table below describes the types of texts that can be found in classrooms and schools.

Above Grade Level Texts	Above grade level texts are texts which are above the grade bands as noted in the standards.
Grade Level Texts	Grade level texts are texts within the grade band as noted in the standards.
Instructional Level Texts	Instructional level texts are accessible for students based on accuracy, fluency, and/or comprehension, but also provide cognitive stretch.
Phonics Controlled Texts	Phonics controlled texts utilize restricted and repeated patterns and often follow skills represented within a phonics continuum. These include decodable and predictable text.
Independent Level Texts	Independent level texts are often self-selected and provide opportunities for students to read independently.

Teachers should use above-grade-level and grade-level texts as the foundation of a strong unit of study that builds conceptual knowledge. Depending upon individual student needs, there are also appropriate times to use other types of texts in addition to above-grade-level and on-grade-level texts. For example, instructional-level texts should always provide cognitive stretch to ensure that students are meeting the ultimate goal of reading at or above grade level. Additionally, phonics-controlled texts can be used to apply phonic knowledge to connected text. As students develop phonic knowledge, phonics-controlled texts decrease in their usability and are replaced with more complex and authentic text types.

Texts should be used flexibly based on the teacher's goals for students, their needs, and the instructional strategies being utilized within a unit. Students should have frequent opportunities each day to actively participate in multiple instructional strategies that integrate a variety of texts around the concept(s) of the unit in order to simultaneously build their skills-based and knowledge-based competencies.

In Think Aloud 1 about small group reading, Mr. Hermann describes his decision making for selecting an above grade level text for his students (see Comprehension).

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Which ELA standards can I teach through the selected texts?

The texts selected for the unit will largely determine which ELA standards are needed to support students' acquisition of both skills and knowledge necessary for deep comprehension and learning. Teachers analyze each text and consider its text features and elements, craft and structure, and opportunities to link foundational skills instruction to authentic texts. Teachers also consider how particular texts lend themselves to opportunities for speaking, listening, and writing.[25] Standards are then purposefully selected to support the goals for instruction.[27]

In the vignette, Mr. Hermann identifies the ELA standards that will support his instructional goals. In Think Aloud 3, he describes how he integrates the reading and writing standards.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

END OF UNIT TASKS

What will I expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?

TEAM Connection
Student Work and *Assessment* indicators on Planning Rubric

Before instruction happens, the teacher should also consider how learning the concept(s), enduring understanding(s), and selected standards will be assessed. **End-of-unit tasks should allow students to demonstrate their critical thinking and textual analysis skills and their conceptual knowledge.** These standards-aligned tasks are rigorous and ask students to:

- organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than simply reproduce;
- draw conclusions, make generalizations, and develop arguments that are supported through extended writing; and
- connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school.

Since rigorous end-of-unit tasks are multi-dimensional, multiple English language arts standards are integrated and assessed in the process.

The end-of-unit task integrated multiple ELA and content standards around the essential questions as it required students to collaboratively work in small groups to create a poster in response to the prompt: "Why do humans need to preserve trees?"

BACK TO VIGNETTE

LESSON SEQUENCE

What standards will be integrated within my lessons?

The standards inform the purpose and objectives of the lessons. Each lesson objective should build in complexity over the course of the unit and drive towards the end-of-unit task.

TEAM Connection
Instructional Plans indicator on Planning Rubric

As teachers plan a sequence of lessons, they should consider what students will read or listen to, what questions they will ponder, what ideas they will discuss, and how they will write about what they learned as they deepen their understanding of the concept over the course of the unit.

Mr. Hermann explains that the learning that is happening with his first graders is preparing them for what will occur in second grade. The students will revisit the interdependence concept when they study the consequences of environmental changes of plants and animals in second grade science.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

What do my students already know?

Teachers should determine what students already know and what they need to know to access the texts. To make these decisions, as well as decisions about what level of scaffolding students will need, teachers should analyze both formative and summative assessment data (e.g., previous tasks, student work samples, anecdotal notes, and observations). This data will help teachers make decisions about lesson design and delivery to ensure students are progressing and meeting grade-level standards. Other data sources like the universal screener, survey-level assessments, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring will help teachers make additional decisions for differentiation and intervention within the unit. Additionally, data analysis helps us uncover why students might struggle to read and/or comprehend (e.g., challenges with decoding, knowledge/concept development, vocabulary, reading stamina, fluency, comprehension deficits, etc.).

TEAM Connection
Instructional Plans and *Assessment* indicators on Planning Rubric

Collaboration with colleagues, coaches, interventionists, and specialists strengthens teachers' analysis and interpretation of data as they determine appropriate supports for students. This, in turn, can help teams pinpoint the types of supports that are best suited for individual student needs through Tier I differentiation and/or through Tiers II and III intervention.

Collaboration is essential for supporting the needs of all students in their classroom, including those that display characteristics of dyslexia, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are identified as gifted. A suite of documents will be developed in order to address the unique needs of this range of learners.

During the text discussion of *The Great Kapok Tree*, Mr. Hermann asks students to define vocabulary, such as community as one way to assess what students know about these words in their own life experiences. He then bridges the text-specific use of *community* to their prior knowledge.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Which instructional strategies will I use? How will I sequence them within the literacy block and the unit?

Teachers should use instructional strategies to help students make meaning of text and to provide instruction in reading and writing. **Instructional strategies should be interwoven throughout the day to allow opportunities for students to gain knowledge through reading, speaking, and listening, and to use that knowledge to produce authentic writing.**

All instructional strategies should provide opportunities for student ownership of learning and responsibility for thinking. Teachers should consider how they are engaging students in varying levels of responsibility throughout the day as they build stamina and independence. This process "emphasizes instruction that mentors students into becoming capable thinkers and learners when handling the tasks with which they have not yet developed expertise" (Buehl, 2005). **Teachers should support students in developing their expertise as readers and writers by flexibly utilizing a variety of instructional strategies throughout the literacy block.** Teachers then make decisions about how much support students will need during each instructional strategy (i.e., what students will do independently, what will need guided support, and what might need to be modeled).

The chart below lists the instructional strategies teachers might use and describes their purpose within the literacy block.

Instructional Strategy	Definition	Possible Purposes
Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive read aloud is an instructional strategy in which students actively listen and respond to above grade level complex text.	• Develop knowledge and vocabulary • Promote critical thinking and analysis of text • Support comprehension strategies • Develop understanding of complex syntax and text structure • Provide opportunities for oral language development • Provide access to complex text that is above grade level • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling
Shared Reading	Shared reading is an interactive experience in which students join in the reading of an on grade level complex text with teacher guidance and support.	• Promote word analysis, fluency, and comprehension skills and strategies • Use supported reading structures (i.e., choral reading, echo reading, etc.) • Develop knowledge and vocabulary • Provide opportunities for authentic application of skills-based and knowledge-based competencies • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling

Instructional Strategy	Definition	Possible Purposes
Small Group Reading	Small group reading is an instructional strategy in which a teacher works in small groups to support students as they read appropriately complex text.	• Provide explicit instruction with foundational skills • Integrate practice with word analysis/ decoding skills and strategies • Integrate practice reading fluently • Support reading and analyzing appropriately complex text and/or build knowledge of a concept • Provide applied practice of skills and strategies in reading and writing • Differentiate based on student needs • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling
Literacy Stations/Choice Boards	Literacy Stations and Choice Boards are structures where students work concurrently on standard-aligned tasks	• Provide opportunities for students to work independently, with partners, or in groups to connect to and extend previous learning
Independent Reading and Reading Conferences	Independent reading provides dedicated time for students to choose and read texts of personal interest with teacher support in selecting text, as needed. Reading conferences allow periodic opportunities for students to talk about their reading and for the teacher to monitor and provide feedback to individual students.	• Provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills • Increase volume of texts students read • Collect evidence for individual students (e.g., anecdotal notes, running records, reading logs, etc.)
Modeled Writing	Modeled writing is an instructional strategy where the teacher explicitly demonstrates the writing process for different forms and purposes.	• Make visible what proficient writers do (e.g., composition process, mentor texts, etc.) • Model writing for strategic purposes such as print concepts, conventions, and content
Shared Writing	Shared writing is an instructional strategy where the teacher and students compose a text together with the teacher acting as the scribe.	• Organize ideas and language through collaboration to produce a coherent text • Involve students in creating authentic text • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling
Interactive Writing	Interactive writing is an extension of shared writing in which the teacher and students compose a text together with the teacher strategically sharing the pen during the process.	• Provide students opportunities to practice writing with the support of teacher and peers • Provide a way to connect reading and writing • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling
Small Group Writing	Small group writing is an instructional strategy in which the teacher works in small groups to support students' writing development.	• Incorporate interactive and shared writing experiences based on group needs • Differentiate based on students' needs • Target traits or skills in the writing process • Guide writing in response to text • Provide opportunities for teacher modeling

Instructional Strategy	Definition	Possible Purposes
Independent Writing and Writing Conferences	Independent writing provides dedicated time for students to apply writing skills and strategies as they compose text. Writing conferences allow periodic opportunities for students to talk about their writing and for the teacher to monitor and provide feedback to individual students.	• Provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills • Provide opportunities to write to build and demonstrate text comprehension • Provide opportunities to write to develop the skill of a writer in connection to text • Provide an opportunity for students to select their own topic, form, purpose, audience, and craft • Collect evidence for individual students (e.g., anecdotal notes, student products, checklists, rubrics, etc.) • Share writing with peers
Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction: Out of Text	Out of Text Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction provides a systematic and explicit way to teach the TN foundational literacy standards, with an emphasis on phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and word composition.	• Build skills according to a continuum or scope and sequence • Build from the simplest to the most complex skills • Provide practice to master each new skill • Provide close study of word parts (e.g., letters, letter combinations, syllables, affixes) • Ensure students are able to master spelling to sound correspondence so that they can independently decode unknown words and attach meaning to them • Practice decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling/writing) using newly acquired skills (i.e., use controlled text when appropriate as a scaffold to authentic text)
Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction: Link to Authentic Text	Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction that is linked to authentic text provides application of foundational skills in connected text to support reading comprehension and written expression.	• Practice decoding in words, phrases, and texts • Apply foundational skills knowledge while writing (e.g., print concepts, phonics, word composition)

Mr. Hermann demonstrates how he used interactive read alouds, shared reading, interactive writing, instruction of foundational skills, small group reading, small group writing, and literacy stations in his literacy block.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

DAILY TASKS

What daily tasks do I need students to complete in order to reach the end of unit task?

As teachers consider the end-of-unit task, they should determine how they will assess students' progress towards this culminating task. Teachers should consider broader, knowledge-based aspects of the texts (e.g., central concept, key ideas, supporting details, etc.) and how they will move students towards high-level

TEAM Connection
Student Work and *Assessment* indicators on Planning Rubric

critical thinking. Speaking and writing activities allow teachers to formatively assess student progress both during and after each lesson. The sequence of daily tasks within a unit should consistently engage students at a level that is cognitively demanding and maintain focus on the unit's enduring understandings. The use of daily tasks provides different methods for students to demonstrate their growing knowledge and progress towards meeting grade-level expectations.

In addition, tasks should be authentic[10] and should help address the essential questions over time. Students should read and write with the intent of:

- answering questions (e.g., How do the interactions of plants and animals impact humans?);
- solving problems (e.g., brainstorming solutions for preserving the environment);
- constructing arguments (e.g., constructing an argument from a character's point of view);
- pursuing interests (e.g., selecting and reading additional books of interest related to the concept being studied);
- building new knowledge (e.g., engaging in multiple reading and writing experiences within the concept).

These tasks can be modeled and practiced within the instructional structures for reading and writing, including during whole group, small group, individual worktime, or literacy stations.

In a broader sense, the daily tasks culminate in a rich, authentic end-of-unit task that prompts the student to utilize multiple standards for the larger purpose of demonstrating knowledge.

In Independent Activity 3: Writing Station, Mr. Hermann has students select an animal from one of the books about rainforests to write an informative text.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

What questions do I need students to answer?

Once tasks are developed, teachers should design question sequences that help students make meaning from the text. Teachers should purposefully plan questions in advance with attention to the enduring understanding and essential questions. Teachers should organize questions of varying levels to support students in gaining a deep understanding of the text. As teachers consider the daily tasks, questions should support students in recall, application, analysis, creation, and evaluation of the content.

To illustrate planning for question sequencing, Mr. Hermann describes his process in Think Aloud 3: Questions and Tasks.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

DURING INSTRUCTION: KEY PRACTICES

Teachers should structure the classroom environment to promote literacy.

TEAM Connection
Environment indicator on Environment Rubric

Classroom design, layout, and materials are essential elements to creating a classroom that promotes literacy. Spaces for instructional strategies like interactive read aloud and small group reading should be well designed and organized and create a warm environment that encourages reading. Teachers should consider including the following elements for their classroom environment:

- **A group meeting space**, like a carpet, would provide an area where students can gather for interactive and shared reading and writing.
- **A small group table** would allow students to engage together with texts during small group reading.
- **Literacy stations** should be organized to provide opportunities for students to practice and/or apply their deepening literacy skills.
- **Student desks or tables** should be arranged to encourage collaborative learning.
- **The walls** should be an extension of the literacy classroom where students access the alphabet, word walls, anchor charts, and see their own work represented.
- **Structures and routines** should be in place to ensure engagement and maximize instructional time as students move throughout the instructional strategies of the literacy block.
- **Materials** that promote literacy development should be readily available and easy to find.
  - The classroom should be filled with many rich and authentic texts.
  - Materials for small group reading (e.g., texts, reference charts, dry erase boards, table top easel, etc.) should be located near the reading table and organized for easy accessibility.
  - A variety of writing and reading materials that provide a variety ways to consume and share knowledge (e.g., journals, notebooks, charts, sentence strips, student-created books, magazines, word walls) should be available near the literacy stations.
  - Digital resources and media should also be available.

Notice in the vignette, that Mr. Hermann uses a variety of spaces to support the instructional strategies (e.g., reading rug for whole group, desks for independent practice and stations).

Additionally, in Independent Activity 2: Independent Reading Station, note that Mr. Hermann's library is full of texts about the trees, animals, and people in a variety of habitats and ecosystems.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should establish a positive climate and culture that promotes lifelong learning.

Teachers should also create a classroom climate and culture that promotes literacy through student collaboration, choice, connection, and ownership.

- Teachers should promote **collaboration** through the use of academic talk structures and grouping arrangements.
- Teachers should provide opportunities for student **choice** by varying the grouping options or types of projects students produce. Offering students choices increases student self-sufficiency, self-direction, **ownership**, and motivation. In this way, teachers create opportunities for building conceptual, social, relational, and personal connections within the educational experience.
- Teachers should acknowledge students' cultural histories and affirm the unique identities and experiences in light of textual interpretations. Bridging **connections** between students' interpretations, including those that are informed by their previous experiences, demonstrates the importance of these connections for advancing text comprehension.

TEAM Connection
Expectations and *Respectful Culture* indicators on Environment Rubric

Mr. Hermann draws on students' interpretation of community in the discussion of The Great Kapok Tree. He acknowledges each student's interpretation of community, such as when Mateo says, "My pastor calls our church a community" and when Sydney says, "It's like your neighborhood." In this example, students' contributions to the discussion contributed to deepening their comprehension of the "community" of animals in rainforest.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should use strong question sequences to support student thinking and meaning making.

During literacy instruction, the primary goal is for students to make meaning of complex text. To this end, teachers should use strong question sequences to help students think critically about what they read. Teachers need to analyze the texts they use in instruction, determine what aspects are most critical to comprehension, identify where students might struggle on a path to comprehension and analysis, and craft questions that prompt students to grapple with the most critical elements necessary for comprehension.

Teachers should make use of strong question sequences that support student understanding and analysis of complex, high-quality texts, rather than focusing on isolated reading skills and standards. Questions should be text-specific and provide opportunities for students to discuss and/or write out their developing thoughts. The question sequence serves as a scaffold for students to make meaning from complex text and build understanding of the enduring concepts of the unit.

TEAM Connection
Questioning, Thinking, and *Problem Solving* indicators on Instruction Rubric

During the interactive read aloud of the text, The Great Kapok Tree, Mr. Hermann transitioned from comprehension questions about which animals lived in the tree to questions that required students to explain why the animals needed the tree, to finally asking students to identify the central idea.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should use structures that engage students in academic talk and collaboration.

Structures for academic talk and collaboration (e.g., turn and talk, accountable talk, think-pair-share, cooperative learning, etc.) generate engagement for all students by providing them with opportunities to ponder the well-crafted question sequence that teachers have prepared. These structures provide opportunities for students to process their learning with peers, moving students toward independent thinking. Opportunities for speaking and listening serve as a kind of oral rehearsal, allowing students to grow more sophisticated in their ideas. Oral language supports a stronger foundation for comprehension and writing. Talk structures can also serve as a formative assessment throughout all instructional strategies.

TEAM Connection
Grouping, Questioning, Motivating Students, and *Academic Feedback* indicators on Instruction Rubric, and *Respectful Culture* indicator on Environment Rubric

As teachers pose a sequence of questions about text, students should have ample opportunities to respond. This structure encourages interaction because students—curious about others' points of view—listen attentively, allowing the perspectives of their peers to inform and expand their own understanding. Alternately, as they seek to be understood, students naturally match their language to their audience and cite evidence to justify their own thoughts and perspectives. When given opportunities to cite evidence and explain texts in their own words, students develop ownership of textual information and are able to apply it in new contexts.

During the interactive read aloud, Mr. Hermann listens carefully to what students are saying during the text discussion and the turn and talk opportunities, making connections between the text conversation and each students' contributions. Additionally, students reread portions of the text when constructing the T chart with Mr. Hermann, providing them opportunities to express text ideas in their own words and to build ownership of these ideas.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should model and engage students in thinking.

Another way to support students' thinking is through teacher modeling. Modeling how to think makes invisible cognitive processes more tangible for students. **Teachers should verbalize the metacognition behind the thinking process about a text to support students in knowing what proficient readers and writers do.** As teachers plan for how they will model their thinking, they should consider the processes they use to make sense of what they read (e.g., *What are the questions I am asking myself?* or *What are the steps I am taking to perform this skill?*).

TEAM Connection
Thinking, Problem Solving, Questioning, and *Presenting Instructional Content* indicators on Instruction Rubric

These questions can then become anchors to guide students in taking on this higher-level thinking.

For example, if a student struggles on a word, the teacher might say, "What do you notice about that word?" or "What strategy are you using to figure out that word?" instead of simply giving the child the word. This strategy is also true for encouraging students to use metacognitive strategies for comprehension and for encouraging students to be thoughtful in their writing. Examples include:

- "How can you figure out what the author means?"
- "The author is requiring you to make an inference here; how will you do that?"
- "What might you do to capture your reader's attention?"

As teachers make decisions about the level of support that certain standards will require, they need to determine which standards or elements of a standard need explicit teacher modeling.

Mr. Hermann models how to craft an informational text with the T chart activity during the interactive read aloud and with the "I can" chart for writing.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should prompt students to deepen discussion.

Teachers should intentionally plan opportunities for students to frequently practice the speaking and listening standards during conversations around concepts and text. As educators engage students in text-focused discussions, they should prompt students to higher levels of thinking through purposeful questioning through planned structures that allow collaboration and academic talk to flourish.

Teachers support academic talk in a variety of ways including:

1. asking students to share partner conversations with the full group;
2. making explicit connections between students' ideas and the text discussion and/or clarify misconceptions by returning to specific text ideas;
3. using graphic organizers designed to capture student thinking during collaborative conversations; and
4. incorporating students' tasks and writing as prompts for discussion as students explain their thinking to others.

Teachers should also support students by providing accountable talk stems as temporary scaffolds that strategically enhance in their sophistication over time and promote rich academic discussion. Some examples of those stems include:

- "I agree with (student) because…"
- "As I listened, I connected with what (student) was saying because…"
- "I respectfully disagree with (student) based on these reasons…"
- "I would like to provide some additional evidence to (specific point) including…"
- "The text says…, which leads me to believe…"

TEAM Connection

Questioning, Thinking, Problem Solving, Academic Feedback, Presenting Instructional Content, Teacher Content Knowledge, and *Teacher Knowledge of Students* indicators on Instruction Rubric

Teachers deepen the rigor of academic talk by paraphrasing and recasting student responses, probing students to clarify or extend thinking, encouraging extended student-to-student conversations, and providing affirmations as students respond. Also, teachers occasionally find the need to step into the modeling role in order to use their own thinking to deepen a discussion before stepping back into the facilitator role.

Mr. Hermann uses a T-chart to prompt his students to recall important information from *The Great Kapok Tree* in preparation for the daily writing task.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should adjust instruction to meet student needs.

TEAM Connection
Academic Feedback, Questioning, and *Teacher Knowledge of Students* indicators on Instruction Rubric

Teachers should utilize ongoing formative assessment to adjust instruction. Every time a student offers a verbal or written response, the student provides a piece of evidence that can be used for formative assessment. Formative assessments are used as a measurement "of learning" and "for learning." As students answer questions, engage in discussions, complete daily tasks, read, and write, teachers glean insight about student learning. This insight is used to monitor and adjust lessons as needed, including:

- shifting to a different level of cognitive demand,
- adding or adjusting talking structures (i.e., turn and talk, think, pair, and share, etc.),
- adding or adjusting accountable talk stems into student discussions,
- providing specific academic feedback, or
- adding or adjusting scaffolded support.

Incorporating scaffolding and opportunities for student practice allow students to demonstrate where they are in comparison to where they will need to be at the end of the unit. For some students, this might offer evidence that a student is already mastering a standard and needs further enrichment. For others, it might be that additional differentiated scaffolds are needed to support progress toward the end-of-unit task.

Collecting formative assessment data throughout the learning process allows teachers to make adjustments to upcoming lessons, ensuring students are prepared to complete the end-of-unit task. White boards, anecdotal notes, checklists, exit slips, graphic organizers, writing products, and digital applications are some ways that teachers can collect this evidence for further analysis

Mr. Hermann shares his use of assessments to inform his instruction in the section, Daily and Unit level assessments.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

AFTER INSTRUCTION: REFLECTION

Effective teachers are reflective practitioners who consistently analyze student data and take stock of their own instructional practices to make future planning decisions, as well as make decisions for their own professional learning.

Teachers should reflect to make decisions for students.

Effective literacy practices require teachers to utilize a variety of data sources to make instructional decisions that will best meet the needs of their students. Teachers should take the evidence collected from multiple forms of assessment and analyze it for patterns, areas of need, and proof of new knowledge and understanding. As previously described, standards are taught through instructional strategies that build toward enduring understanding(s). Data analysis allows teachers to plan for differentiation in their daily lessons and ensure all students are progressing toward grade-level standard expectations and their understanding of the conceptual knowledge needed for the end-of-unit task.

As teachers consider where students are in the progression toward meeting grade-level expectations, they should make decisions about: 1) which standards need further instruction; 2) how the instructional strategies for the following day will continue to support students' acquisition of both skills and knowledge; 3) what supports are needed for individual students. As teachers answer the question, "What specific supports does each student need in order to meet or exceed grade-level expectations?" they consider the entire range of learners, including those identified with disabilities, students who are identified as gifted, and English learners. For the great majority of students, Tier I instruction supports the acquisition of grade-level competencies. For others, interventions in addition to Tier I will be necessary to narrow the gap. Differentiation within the Tier I literacy block ensures that all students receive a guaranteed and viable curriculum and progress toward grade-level expectations. When sources of evidence reflect areas of struggle, additional differentiaion is provided in Tier I in order to address these student needs.

Once teachers have determined the areas that need to be addressed during Tier I, proactive adjustments are made for the following day in order to best meet the needs of ALL students in the classroom. This can be done by adjusting the complexity of the daily task, adjusting the question sequence, increasing or decreasing the level of support for a particular activity, or by changing the instructional strategy entirely.

In Think Aloud 4: Reflection on the Lesson, Mr. Hermann reflects on his students learning during the interactive read aloud and writing activities and plans for adjustments to future instruction.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Additionally, in Think Aloud 2: Assessment, Mr. Hermann demonstrates his use of multiple data sources to support the instructional adjustments required to respond to students' struggles and misunderstandings.

BACK TO VIGNETTE

Teachers should reflect to make decisions for professional learning.

At the conclusion of lessons, teachers should consider how their own instructional practices impacted student outcomes, reflecting on what went well, as well as what did not. Below is the process for engaging in reflection on instructional practice. This reflection could be self-led or supported by a coach or peer.

TEACHER REFLECTION

R **Remember to ground the reflection.**
Ground the reflection by analyzing student work and formative assessment data.

E **Effectively use teacher and student evidence.**
Consider where students did well and where they struggled. Compare this to the pedagogical practices you implemented. Sometimes you might find it helpful to have a coach or peer observe your practice to help you record this evidence.

F **Find connections between the instructional triangle (content, pedagogy, and student learning).**
Make connections between the outcomes you saw in the student data and how your pedagogical practices contributed to those outcomes. Focus as specifically as possible on smaller aspects of your practice, like your questioning or grouping structures. A narrow focus can lead to a deeper and more specific reflection.

L **Label what led to success.**
Once you have connected the impact of your instruction on student learning of the content, reflect to consider what you did that led to that success (e.g. How did you plan?, How did you adjust during the lesson?, What decisions did you make?).

E **Explore possibilities for change.**
Explore potential options for ways you could have adjusted the instruction to get a different result.

C **Commit to refinement or extension.**
Commit to either continuing to refine a practice or to continuing to use a practice you found effective. Great reflection ends in an action plan that continues to strengthen professional practice over time.

T **Take time to reflect on the process.**
Ask yourself, "How did this reflection process help me?" Consider how it supported you as a teacher and how it will also help your students. Taking time to think about the reflection process will assist you in continuing to strengthen your own reflective process.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Tennessee's approach to literacy instruction, as articulated in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, emphasizes the need for teachers to have the autonomy to make strong instructional decisions every day to support students in gaining the skills of readers and writers as they develop knowledge about the world. Through this approach, teachers:

1. **engage students in a high volume of reading;**
2. **provide multiple opportunities for students to read and listen to text that is at or above their grade level;**
3. **structure opportunities for students to think deeply about texts and share their thinking through speaking and writing;**
4. **support students in developing the skill and craft of a writer; and**
5. **provide multiple opportunities to practice and apply foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically in authentic reading and writing.**

Teachers use multiple forms of data as they make decisions about how to best structure the lesson sequence and block out their instructional day. As emphasis is placed on building conceptual knowledge through listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts, teachers will be making the necessary instructional shifts needed to meet the demands of the Tennessee Academic Standards. This includes increasing students' engagement with complex text and its academic language; providing opportunities for reading, writing, and speaking using textual evidence; and building conceptual knowledge through rich nonfiction texts. Tennessee's approach maintains students as the keystone of sound literacy instruction with the ultimate goal of students who are ready for postsecondary and the workforce. Placing students as the keystone in all we do, Tennessee educators embrace and celebrate the diversity of young and adolescent learners as they employ evidence-proven, responsive, and individualized instruction. For early literacy teachers, this means incorporating both skills-based and knowledge-based instruction throughout the day as they support **ALL** students in becoming proficient readers.

Teaching Literacy in Tennessee provides the framework for K–3 literacy practices that will anchor professional learning and support for teachers and leaders across the state. Guaranteeing student success means ensuring that the more than 65,000 teachers and almost 5,000 administrators across the state receive the support they need to continuously improve their practice. Through the Read to be Ready and other early learning initiatives, the department will continue to focus on supporting teachers and leaders in literacy instruction and will continue to develop opportunities to come together around our unifying vision for Tennessee: Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

GLOSSARY

A

Authentic Text: often called "real books" or "trade books," this term refers to published narrative and informational texts that students are able to access; these can sometimes be used as primary or secondary sources

C

Choice boards: offer a series of activities that focus on students' specific learning needs, interests, and abilities; students decide which activity they are most comfortable completing first, and once they master it, they can move on to more challenging activities

Climate: is the social, emotional, and physical aspects that make up the classroom environment

Close Reading: intensive, thorough, and methodical analysis of a text passage to determine its key ideas and supporting details; close reading often includes repeated readings to uncover various layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension.

Composition Process: the writing process

Comprehension: the ability to understand and make meaning of text

Concept(s): abstract or general ideas that represent universal knowledge that can be applied in various contexts

Conceptual Understanding: understanding of ideas and the ability to transfer knowledge into new situations and apply it to new contexts

Constrained Skills: skills, such as phonological awareness, phonics, concepts about print, and oral reading fluency, which are taught to universal levels of mastery in a relatively short time frame

Culture: norms and expectations that define the classroom community

D

Daily Tasks: provide different methods for students to demonstrate their growing knowledge and progress towards meeting grade level expectations

Decoding: the process of matching letters or letter combinations (graphemes) to their sounds (phonemes) in order to decipher a word

Differentiated Instruction: a process for making proactive adjustments in order to ensure students meet grade level expectations

Disciplinary Knowledge: an understanding of knowledge and concepts related to certain subject areas

E

End of Unit Tasks: tasks that require students to apply and demonstrate knowledge and skills at the end of units (summative assessments)

Enduring Understanding: statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom

Essential Question: a question that provides direction, purpose, and relevance to lessons and units; an essential question stimulates thought and inquiry around enduring understandings to build conceptual knowledge

Explicit Instruction: direct, face-to-face teaching that is highly structured, focused on specific learning outcomes, and based on a high level of student and teacher interaction; it involves explanation (what), demonstration (how), and relevant practice (when and why) with topics being taught in a logical order

F

Fluency: the ability to read words accurately and effortlessly with appropriate expression, phrasing, stress, intonation, and rate

Formative Assessment: assessments utilized during instruction to provide the information needed to effectively direct and target teaching and learning as it occurs

Foundational Literacy Skills: a set of skills that develop students' understanding and knowledge of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition, and fluency; these skills are sequenced and serve as a platform for later competence and proficiency in reading and writing across text types and disciplines

G

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum: an accessible set of learning opportunities provided to all students in connection to a set of standards which can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers

I

Instructional Strategy: an instructional technique or method (e.g., interactive read aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, etc.)

Integration: incorporating multiple standards with predetermined emphasis within a single lesson or unit

L

Literacy: the ability to read and write as a means of communication

M

Metacognition: an awareness and understanding of one's own thinking process

P

Phonics: the study of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent

Phonological Awareness: an overall awareness of sounds in oral language that includes identifying, counting, isolating, segmenting, blending, and manipulating (inserting, deleting, and substituting) sounds at the word level, syllable level, onset/rime level, and phoneme level

R

Rigor: a level of work that appropriately challenges student thinking

S

Scaffolding: an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students

Skills: abilities that are needed to perform a task or activity

Standard Strands: elements of the Tennessee Academic Standards; for ELA, these include: Reading, Foundational Skills, Language, Speaking and Listening, and Writing

Strategy: set of procedures or steps that an individual uses to solve a problem

Structures: a system of organization where learning occurs (e.g., whole group, small group, etc.)

Systematic: refers to a carefully planned sequence for instruction that builds from simple to complex

T

Text Complexity: the level of sophistication in a text (in terms of content, intellectual engagement, and student readiness); text complexity can be measured through a three-part assessment including: qualitative measures, quantitative measures, and reader-task considerations

Tier I Instruction: grade level instruction, targeted to meet the diverse needs of all learners, provided in the general education classroom

U

Unconstrained Skills: skills that develop across a lifetime, including the areas of vocabulary and comprehension

W

Word Analysis: the ability to use phonic knowledge to make systematic decisions to decode words in text

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