Writing for Language Acquisition: Increasing Comprehensible Input Using Mentor Text

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Introduction and Rationale

A staff member at our school came up to me in the office and said, "I was working with one of your students today. We were reading a book about how trees become bare and the leaves fall and decay. The student raised his hand and asked why would there be a bear in a tree playing Donkey Kong (the abbreviation for Donkey Kong is *DK* in the gaming world)?" The staff member was astonished. She knew the student was an ELL (English Language Learner), but was still taken aback with his inquiry. "His English is so good," She said. "I would've never guessed he would have been confused by that book."

This scenario brings to light some questions. Is language acquisition accomplished when we can carry on a conversation with native-like fluency? Are people proficient in a language because they can comprehend what others say and respond in kind? Sure, the ability to converse is important in language acquisition, however, could there be other factors that give a more authentic assessment on language proficiency? I teach ESL students ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade at an elementary school in a suburban community north of Charlotte, NC. We have a relatively small LEP (Limited English Proficiency) student population (3%) compared to the 1,255 students, mostly highly academic middle class, who attend our school. Many of my students have achieved native-like proficiency in speaking English, but do not perform well in the academics of the classroom.

As mandated by Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act, I give an annual state assessment called the WIDA™ Access Test. This test assesses four components of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The majority of the LEP students score near or at grade level for speaking and listening. Reading is the next highest score on average, leaving writing at the bottom. There were several children last year that achieved a perfect 6.0 on the speaking, listening, and reading components in grades 3 and 4. Unfortunately due to their low writing scores, they could not be exited from the ESL program. My theory about significantly lower writing scores with respect to the other components is that the writing goals in the upper elementary classrooms do not align with the writing assessment objectives of the WIDA™ Access test. The North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) states, "The goal in grades 3-5 is to move students toward increasing independence in the use of communication skills and strategies. In this grade span, students become independent readers and writers and continue to expand their literacy proficiency. They learn to apply their foundational skills automatically and flexibly to reading and writing fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry." However, many of the ELL's (English Language Learners) in my class do not apply "foundational" skills automatically. In fact, with regards to information processing, Lightbown and Spada indicate that "there's a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention to. Thus, learners at the earliest stages will use most of their resources to understand the main words in a message." This seems to suggest that the objectives of the NCSCOS may be too complex for

the ESL student. The North Carolina language arts objectives for 3-5 grade classes are more focused on the writer's craft to align with the state standards and less on the mechanics of writing. The WIDA™ Consortium does not evaluate Access test writing samples using NCSCOS. Instead, the Consortium uses a research based writing rubric that hinges on three criteria: linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control. (See Appendix B)

Linguistic complexity as defined by the WIDA™ Consortium is "the amount of discourse (oral or written), the types and variety of grammatical structures, the organization and cohesion of ideas and, at higher levels of language proficiency, the use of text structures in specific genre." As seen in the WIDA™ Writing Rubric, linguistic complexity focuses on progression of sentence length, cohesion of written text and organization of written text. The second column is vocabulary usage, which puts emphasis on the knowledge of academic vocabulary and the ability to utilize the vocabulary in the proper context. The third assessment category, language control, gives consideration to the ability of the reader to understand the writing in relation to the amount of errors the writing may contain.

In examining the standards that guide grade-level classroom instruction and the criteria used to assess the ESL students in annual state testing, it is clear there is a gap in language arts writing instruction and reaching the exit criteria for the ESL program. This unit is designed to close the gap and increase ELL (English language learner) performance in the writing component of the WIDA™ Access test for grades 3-5.

In looking at the three criteria used in the WIDA™ writing rubric, I decided to concentrate on improving vocabulary usage. Increasing a student's vocabulary, be it in the first or second language, is one of the main ways to improve comprehension skills. Vocabulary allows a person to label objects and thoughts in one's environment. Attaching a word to an object or thought accelerates recall which increases fluency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Growth in Linguistic Complexity and Language Control are important but do depend on the amount of vocabulary one possesses. Learning content specific or technical vocabulary connects abstract ideas and is essential for success in not only language acquisition, but also all content areas. Academic language is not as easy to acquire because it not usually used in a social situation, leaving limited occasions to practice and assimilate into memory. My job throughout this unit is to provide opportunities to use academic vocabulary in discussions and readings, so students can expand their vocabulary usage and apply it to their writing. But how will the vocabulary be presented in an interesting and enticing way? How will I motivate the students to learn content specific language that may be abstract or foreign to their background knowledge? Linda Hoyt says that one key to successful instruction is to "ensure that the learning environment is rich in concept development." The key is to make the vocabulary tangible and comprehensible to each student.

Tracy Terell's natural approach supports the idea that in language acquisition, the most effective way to present a new language is through comprehensible input. Input, words or ideas expressed in a second language, cannot just be spoken or read but needs to be presented in a manner that the listener grasps the meaning. "Research on comprehension-based approaches to second language acquisition shows that learners can make considerable progress if they have sustained exposure to language they understand." There are various techniques for teaching

vocabulary in a comprehensible manner. TPR (Total Physical Response), picture cards, gestures, and realia (using a lemon to teach the word "lemon") are some examples. I wanted to utilize a technique that could reach children with varied abilities in language and backgrounds; so, for this unit, I chose to teach vocabulary through picture books, specifically mentor texts.

Mentor texts are written pieces of published work that are used in teaching to demonstrate a skill or idea that the teacher wants the students to model. Since I wanted to focus on increasing content-specific vocabulary, I narrowed my selection of mentor texts to the genres of nonfiction or informational text. Eighty-six percent of print read by adults is nonfiction. Fifty to eighty-five percent of standardized tests are nonfiction. Students will be expected to write, not fairy tales, but information rich, research papers in high school and college. Most of academic success will depend on the skills needed to process and produce information in various areas of content. To be a literate adult in our society, students need to read, interpret and analyze nonfiction material. The more nonfiction material that I can teach my students to digest, the better prepared they will be for careers in the twenty-first century.

Non-fiction text not only better prepares children to interact in the world, but also helps their understanding of the world. Many may believe that implementing a unit solely based on informational text may be a bit lackluster compared to the artistic beauty and eloquence of fictional stories. Others may believe that the concept of this unit will suffocate the students' creativity and imagination. But the truth is that reading about life enlightens students about the world around them and the world will make more sense. In what better way could the imagination be fed than by enhancing knowledge? This is especially true for ESL students. Utilizing information text levels the playing field between ELL's and their grade level peers due to the straightforward language of non-fiction books. Another point worth mentioning is that most non-fiction texts are written in present tense verb form, which is easier for ELL's to comprehend. Another benefit is the limited use of idiomatic and figurative language in non-fiction writing. Figurative language can cause confusion for language learners who may know the words of an idiom or metaphor, but do not understand the coupling of the same words to create a different meaning.

Unit Overview

My unit is written for a 4th grade, pull-out ESL class. The class meets three times a week for 40 minutes. The students have various cultural backgrounds and English proficiency levels. This unit has a dual instructional purpose: content language and non-fictional text features. There will be five non-fiction children's books that will be used to teach vocabulary that is aligned with NCSCOS goals and our ESL curriculum for Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. These five books will also be used as a means to identify various text features. Two to three weeks will be spent on each mentor text; thereafter, we will then spend another a week for students to create their own non-fiction text about our school. This end of unit project will largely be comprised of work that the children completed in the previous ten to 12 weeks and incorporate the non-text features that we have studied. The layout of the end of unit book is as follows:

1. Title
2. Table of Contents

3. School Map
4. Graph of "How many girls and boys are in the school?"
5. Written directions on "How to eat lunch in the cafeteria?"
6. School Workers (describing four staff positions at school)
7. Biography of the Principal
8. Glossary

By grade 4, students have had experience seeing features like the table of contents and the glossary in textbooks. However, now they will get to create their own for a practical purpose. These foreign concepts in textbooks will be made comprehensible through real-life applications, as Hoyt reminds us, "learning is about making connections. When skills are infused into a topic of interest and related to a content area of study, there are more points of connection for our learners to grasp."

Not only will the unit connect to text, but also to technology. Students will place graphs into their published work using Microsoft Excel. They will also use Microsoft Word to write about the job descriptions of school personnel and the principal's biography and find clipart for their map symbols. It has been my experience that children love to work on the computer, which gives them extra motivation to work on this project. Again, I feel this is an area that narrows the gap between the ELL's of different proficiency levels and their grade level peers since technology in the classroom is typically reserved for the teacher, not the student.

Writing Component

Understanding text features and increasing vocabulary knowledge are the means by which the unit material is made comprehensible, but they are not the purpose. The main focus of this unit is to improve writing skills. I do not believe that rote writing or writing drills improves one's skills. I also do not believe that writing is a solitary skill that develops best through independent practice. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are communication tools. These communication tools are interrelated and therefore, it is impossible to work on each skill independently from the other. In reality, we will be using and improving all the skills, but assessing the writing component.

In our classroom, we will be putting theory into practice. My lessons will be based on an interactionist viewpoint. I believe that it is the interaction a child has with its environment that has the greatest impact on a child's development. Behaviorists also believe that the environment is important. However, in this scenario the child is seen as a product of their environment by means of imitation and repetition. In my opinion, this is a very shallow and inaccurate viewpoint of the complexity of language acquisition. A child can learn through repetition, but repetition cannot build ideas and thoughts. Imitation cannot grow the individuality of Vygotsky's "inner speech."

Robert M. Vanderburg states that most of the current research looks at how students use social interaction to develop writing. In reviewing research for writing based on Vygotsky's theories, Vanderburg also says that, "Vygotsky felt that written language develops through "inner speech" (Vygotsky, 1978) and is dependent upon the functional use of written symbols

instead of sound." Lightbown and Spada claim that, for Vygotsky, "thought was essentially internalized speech, and speech emerged in social interaction." From this we can ascertain that, if we introduce new vocabulary to "inner speech" through the social interaction in the classroom, then we can improve a student's writing by expanding vocabulary knowledge.

Lightbown and Spada emphasize the importance of vocabulary when they say, "we can communicate by using words that are not placed in the proper order, pronounced perfectly, or marked with the proper grammatical morphemes, but communication often breaks down if we do not use the correct word." I will further expand on that to say that it is not only important to speak the correct word, but to comprehend it when it is spoken, as noted in our "Donkey Kong" story. This unit will focus on the vocabulary in each of our five texts by first reading the text, so we may hear the author uninterrupted. Then we will reread the text to look for vocabulary words that the class does not know. I will have previewed the text beforehand and have generated a list of words that I think may be unfamiliar to the students. After introducing the identified words to the class, they will then write down the words in their vocabulary journals. As a class, we will talk about the word and create a definition together. Only if the class cannot produce a clear and correct definition, will I reveal the meaning to the class. By letting the class create a definition together, they are being active and responsible for their own learning. Students are using their metacognitive skills to think about vocabulary that is lacking in their background knowledge and then using contextual references and group discussion to assimilate new vocabulary information. For this reason, I will only select non-fiction texts that are visually rich and can be useful in finding context clues. We will continue to include a vocabulary exercise for each day we meet in the remainder of the two weeks left for the mentor text. "Among the factors that make new vocabulary more easily learnable by second language learners is the frequency with which the word is seen, heard and understood." This process of reinforcing new vocabulary will be repeated for each book we use.

Along with the vocabulary study in our lessons, we will also have reading response journaling. The reading response journaling will be done in each class and should only take about 5 minutes. This task serves as practice for daily writing in a meaningful way and will focus on the content discussed in our text. The template for the reading response log is as follows:

Name:	Date:
Title of Book:	Author:
Day One: ____/____/_____ A new word I learned is _____. (Look in your vocabulary journals.) What I learned in this book today is _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Mrs. Stamey's Thoughts
Day Two: ____/____/____ A new word I learned is _____. (Look in your vocabulary journals.) Reading this book makes me think of _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Mrs. Stamey's Thoughts

_____ _____ _____	
Day Three: ____/____/____ A new word I learned is _____. (Look in your vocabulary journals.) Name a text feature in this book. What does it do? _____ _ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Mrs. Stamey's Thoughts

The student will write the entry on the left side of the entry, while the right side is reserved for my remarks. In my responses, I will read and comment positively on each journal to show that writing is not only a tool for communication but that it is also an enjoyable activity. I will not use this opportunity to correct the student's writing in any way, only to share thoughts and ideas and to nurture the student-teacher relationship. To focus on meaning and form simultaneously would be overwhelming to a student's processing and miss the point of the whole unit: increasing vocabulary. Lightbown and Spada point out that, based on VanPatten's Input Processing research, learners have limited processing capacity and cannot pay attention to form and meaning at the same time. It's not to say that grammar practice is not practical. It just isn't the focus of journaling. The majority of the writing prompts for journaling will be directly related to the concept board in class that relates to our non-fiction text content that we are studying for those two weeks. A concept board is an interactive bulletin board in class that is reserved for questions and answers, realia, visuals and any other information that will aid in the understanding of the content being covered. The students are active contributors to the concept board. My intention is that they will reference it for journaling or writing to provide additional scaffolding in the class.

Assessment

Several assessments, both formal and informal, will take place throughout this unit. The overall project will be formally assessed using a rubric. The criteria assessed on the rubric are completion of tasks, presentation, number and proper use of text features, as well as the three criteria used in the WIDA™ Writing Rubric: Linguistic Complexity, Vocabulary Usage and Language Control. The children will not be given the rubric beforehand due the complexity. It would be overwhelming to them. However, as previously mentioned, most of the components of the unit project will be completed before the project is formally initiated. The assessments for these are self-assessments using checklists that prompt attention to details and use student friendly language. Students will be able to self-monitor their progress without needing to view the unit project rubric that I will use for assessment.

Classroom Set-up

There are some components that are needed in an ESL classroom that you might not find in a regular education class. Since the students are in the process of acquiring a second language, we

will need many visuals in the room to support them. For example, most fourth grade classrooms do not have an alphabet posted in the room, unless it's in cursive script. An ESL classroom should have an alphabet displayed for the students to reference, with phonetic diagrams for higher proficient students. Many of my students still reference the alphabet for spelling and alphabetizing. Also, an ESL room should be labeled with environmental print. For example, the window would have a sign that reads "window" next to it. Both ESL and grade-level classes in our school have word walls. A word wall lists frequently used words that students should know at certain grade levels. These words are sorted by letters of the alphabet and listed accordingly. Another feature that grade-level classes and ESL classes may have in common is a concept board for supporting the content being taught in class.

Besides enriching the classroom with text, students need the availability of some tools. Dictionaries, both English and Native Language, should be readily available to use for classroom work. If you do not have ancillaries to help children look up words such as synonyms and antonyms, you may want to have some posted in the class or written in a vocabulary journal to reference. It's not enough to have a learning rich environment. The students need to feel at ease in the classroom and know how to use the learning tools you have provided.

Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan One: Creating a Concept Board
Objective: To help students learn the text features of a non-fiction text and how can we use them to learn information
Materials: butcher paper or fabric to cover the board; sentence strips; index cards; markers; 3 computer printouts that reads "Concept Board," "Questions," and "Text Features"; a labeled copy of each text feature that is represented on the board: Table of Contents, Index, Glossary, Caption, Labels, Diagrams, Timeline, Bar Graph, Schedule, List, Map, and Map Key
Vocabulary Words: table of contents, index, glossary, caption, labels, diagrams, timeline, bar graph, schedule, list, map, and map key
Preparation: The board should be blank except for the board heading "Concept Board," the subheading "Questions" and subheading "Text Features" which divide the board into two sections. Also, pre-write these questions on sentence strips to present in class discussion: 1. What are some synonyms or other words that mean the same as non-fiction? 2. How do you know when a book is non-fiction? 3. Are books the only texts you read that are non-fiction? 4. How are fiction and non-fiction books the same? How are they different?
Activity One: 1. Bring the students to the carpet in front of the concept board. 2. Talk about non-fiction texts. Ask the students questions from the pre-written sentence strips. Staple the strips to the Concept Board under the subheading "Question" when you ask the question on the strip. Have the students answer on index cards and place next to the question strip.
Activity Two: 1. Pass out the five non-fiction texts that we will use for this chapter. Add extra books if you have a group larger than five. 2. Give the students time to look through the books. Then, hold up text feature examples. Ask if anyone saw this feature in the book. Talk about why this could be useful. 3. As you introduce the feature,

staple to the board under the subheading "Text Features."
Wrap-Up: Give the students small sticky notes. Ask them to attach a sticky note to every text feature they find (reference the concept board).
Assessment: Walk around the room to monitor the text feature identification and ask them questions about the feature. Why do we need this feature? What can we learn from it? What information does it show? Where else have you seen this feature? When you have had a chance to assess everyone, then ask the students to find a classmate with the same text feature. How is their feature different? How is it the same?

Lesson Plan Two: How a House is Built
Rationale: In my fourth grade ESL curriculum, the class learns about Native American culture and various types of dwellings. I selected How a House is Built by Gail Gibbons to start the non-fiction unit. This book teaches the vocabulary for building materials, different styles of house, workers and their job descriptions, and simplified step-by-step instructions on building a house. The vocabulary can be technical; girder, joist, header and studs to name a few. I decided to narrow the vocabulary list to twenty words.
Materials: How a House is Built by Gail Gibbons; an overhead organizer of vocabulary words with these headings: types of houses, careers or jobs in construction, equipment to move dirt, and parts of a house; raw materials for building houses (wood, stones, and red clay); copies of the overhead to give as handout, reading response logs, sentence strips with one step of how to build a house written on each strip, self-check rubric for lunchroom, self-check rubric for school workers
Vocabulary Words: log cabin, stone house, adobe house, cement block house, architect, contractor, electrician, plumber, landscaper, bulldozer, dump truck, septic, roof, basement, shingle, furnace, chimney, wood, glass, story (floors)
Preparation: Print out pictures to accompany the vocabulary words to use when introducing the vocabulary words.
Activity One: 1. Pass around the raw materials to the students. Tell the students that we are going to read a book that talks about how a house is built and some houses are built with these materials. 2. Read the book straight through without interruptions. Have the students save questions and comments until the end. 3. Pass out reading response logs for reflection on the story.
Activity Two: 1. Introduce vocabulary words on the graphic organizer overhead. Pass out vocabulary handout of the overhead. Cover all other subheadings except for the one you are talking about to help the students focus on one group at a time. Use the pictures to help define words. 2. Students write words in their vocabulary journals.
Activity Three: 1. Pass out vocabulary picture cards. 2. Reread the story. When the students hear or see the vocabulary word, have them hold up the card. Be sure to read slowly so children can identify their word. 3. Have students do the second entry to reading response log.
Activity Four: 1. Review the vocabulary by flipping through the book and pointing to the picture for students to define. 2. Review text features on Concept Board. Read the story again, but this time, focus on the text features and their purpose in the book. 3. Do the last entry of the reading response journal.
Activity Five: Pass out pre-written sentence strips with the steps on how to build a

house. Have the student work together to place in the correct order. Talk about why there is a correct order. Discuss routines in our lives. Is an order important?
Activity Six: 1. Review the order of how to build a house and why is there a certain order that needs to be followed. Can we put on the roof before the walls? Think about getting ready in the morning. Do we have the same routine every morning? 2. Model by writing on the board what you do every morning. Make sure you are thinking out loud and give reasons why you do things in a certain order. 3. Have the students write down their morning routine. Each student should have at least six steps to their morning routine.
Activity Seven: 1. Review my morning routine. 2. Tell the students that we have many routines we follow. One routine is how we eat lunch at school. Think about how you get your lunch at school if you buy you're lunch. 3. Give the students 10 index cards. Ask the students to write each step of getting their lunch on each card. Number the cards to keep them in order. 4. Walk around the room to monitor progress. Make sure the self-check rubrics are being used. 5. When they have been approved, students may type the lunch routine on the computer using Microsoft Word. Self-Check List for Lunch Routine ↻ I have 8 – 10 steps in my lunch routine. ↻ I have capitals at the beginning of sentences. ↻ I have periods at the end of my sentences. ↻ I checked my spelling. ↻ I read my list to a student in the class. Example of Lunch Routine: 1. I pick up a lunch tray. 2. I get in the lunch line. 3. I choose a drink. 4. I tell the server which food I want. 5. I get a napkin, fork, spoon and straw. 6. I pay for my lunch. 7. I go to my lunch table. 8. When lunch is over, I throw away the trash. 9. I put the tray in the window. 10. I line up to wait for my teacher.
Activity Eight: 1. Talk about the workers in the book. Who can name some workers in the book? Did they do different jobs or the same jobs? How did they work together? In order to make things run smoothly like a hospital or bank, people need to focus on one job and work as a team. Can you name some people that make a school operate smoothly? Start a list on the board. Write what these people do next to the names. 2. Ask the students to select four jobs in the school that they would like to write 3 – 5 sentence about. These sentences should tell what these people do in the school and why they are important. 3. Hand out self-check list for self-assessment. Self Check List for School Workers: ↻ I selected four school workers to write about. ↻ I have 3 – 5 sentences for each school worker. ↻ I have capitals at the beginning of sentences. ↻ I have periods at the end of my sentences. ↻ I checked my spelling. ↻ I read my list to a student in the class. 4. When students are finished, they can type out their descriptions on Microsoft Word.

Lesson Plan Three: Maps
Rationale: The next text I selected is from Scholastic's Rookie Read-About® Geography series and is titled Types of Maps by Mary Dodson Wade. It is very simple to read and

describes the basic attributes of a map, which is perfect for beginning learners. Being familiar with maps aids in connecting to content in the social studies curriculum and life skills. The vocabulary in this book is basic. The focus of this lesson is more on being able to read and create a map.
Objective: To teach students to identify features of a map and map key and be able to utilize and create a map.
Materials: treasure chest containing a prize for each student; a fabricated map of the school; a few different types of maps (Disney map, state map, city map, globe); overhead with a map (map key and compass rose printed on it); handout of a map, copy of the school map with no text on it
Vocabulary Words: river, lake, ocean, mountain, road, railroad track, school, post office, library, mall, museum, train station, bus station, park, north, south, east, west, map key, country, state, city, map, left, right, up, down
Preparation: Have a treasure chest with a prize for each student in class. Hide this treasure inside the school so that other students can't tamper with it, such as the office or in the media center on a high shelf, but visible. I made a treasure box for my class by going to a craft store and buying a wooden box, painting it brown, adding jewels, and painting a skull with crossbones on it.
Activity One: 1. Read the book, Types of Maps. Point out the map keys on the map and explain their importance in map reading. Ask questions so the students have to decipher the map keys on the maps. 2. When you are finished with the book, tell the students there is a treasure hidden in the school with prizes and we're going on a treasure hunt today. Ask them, "How could we find the treasure?" "What do we need to show us where something is?" Unroll the map and show the class. "Let's see if we can read the map." Talk about what you see on the map. What does the "X" mean on the map? Go for a treasure hunt through the school. As you are hunting, point out places on the map as you walk by. Bring the chest back to the room and have the students predict what is in the box. Ask them to write their prediction on a sticky note. Collect the notes. Enjoy the treat in the room as you show the class how to graph their predictions. 3. Have students respond in their reading response logs.
Activity Two: 1. Reread Types of Maps with the students. 2. Place an overhead with a map on the projector. Ask what the compass rose is and what it does. Ask where the map key is and it's function. "Are these non-fiction text features? Can you find them on the Concept Board?" Ask questions that require using the map key to answer. 3. Pass out a map of a town. Tell a story that gives directions to the students so they will have to read the map to find a final destination. Have the students write the destination of the end of the story. 4. Collect papers and have students respond in their reading response log.
Activity Three: 1. Have several map displayed on the board when students come in the room. "How are these maps the same? How are they different? What would be the best map to find a country? Which is the best map to find a road?" Explain how maps can be different, but we need different types to tell us specific information. When we want to go places we haven't been, a map can help us. Ask the students if they think a map of the school could help students and parents who haven't visited the school before. Should we make them a map to help them find their way? Brainstorm places in the school we could put on the map and decide what symbols to use for the map key. 2. Hand out the maps

of the school with no text on it. Tell the students that we are going to map out the school and fill in the missing information. Make sure room numbers are filled in with the teachers' names. 3. Collect first draft of maps when completed.
Activity Four: Have the students go on the computer to Microsoft Word so they can select clipart to use in the map key of their maps. Some suggestions for symbols are: bathroom, water fountain, art room, music room, media center, computer lab, gym, playground and bus lot. Print the appropriate size picture and save for the final copy of the school map.
Activity Five: 1. Give back the rough draft of the school map. Ask the students to use their best handwriting to fill in the information on the map and fasten the clipart to their map. 2. Distribute the following self-check list to students. Monitor progress and collect when completed. School Map Self-Check List ⟲ Did I put a room number and name in every room? ⟲ Do I have a symbol for every special area, bathroom, and water fountain? ⟲ Do I have a map key with all my symbols labeled? ⟲ Do I have a title on my map?

Lesson Plan Four: Statue of Liberty
Rationale: For this lesson, I selected a book from Scholastic's A True Book Series™ titled The Statue of Liberty by Elaine Landau. This book supports the immigration unit in the North Carolina Standards for fourth grade and is rich in text features. I suggest using small sticky notes to highlight points to label key points. There is much to look at.
Objective: To increase knowledge of the statue of liberty and identify text features.
Materials: The Statue of Liberty by Elaine Landau, K-W-L chart on butcher paper, construction paper, copies of text features on note cards, a poster of Statue of Liberty, a copper penny with oxidation, a world map, modeling clay
Vocabulary Words: statue, liberty, immigrants, citizens, sculptor, timeline, torch, crown, robe, pedestal, island, copper, France
Activity One: 1. Display the picture of the Statue of Liberty. Tell the students that we are going to read a book about the Statue of Liberty. 2. Write the vocabulary words on the board by grouping together the following: Group A: statue, torch, crown, robe, pedestal, copper, sculptor, pedestal, France; Group B: immigrants, citizens, liberty; Group C: timeline. 3. Talk about how the words are grouped. Use the Statue of Liberty picture, a copper penny and world map to assist in defining words in Group A. Use the glossary on page 46 to help define the words in Group B. Use the Concept Board to help define the word in Group C. Have the students write down their new vocabulary words in their vocabulary journal. 4. After writing down vocabulary words, tell the class that they are going to make a Statue of Liberty out of modeling clay. Use the picture of the statue to first build the pedestal. Then, finish making the statue by building the robe, torch and head with crown. Talk about being sculptors and how the real Statue of Liberty is made out of copper. 5. When the students are finished, discuss sculpting. What is sculpting? Did they like to sculpt? How do you think the Statue of Liberty was assembled or put together?

Activity Two: Introduce the new book by gaining some background knowledge. Ask "Who recognized the statue on the cover? What do we know about this statue?" Mark answers down on the "K" or Know section of the K-W-L chart. If there is not much shared, then tell the class that it's the Statue of Liberty and we are going to learn more today. Ask the class what they would like to know. If solicitation is needed, then ask, "Do you think someone made this? Do you wonder what it's made of? Do you think it was made in the U.S.A or somewhere else?" What else would you like to know?" Write all questions asked about the statue in the "W" or "What" column of the K-W-L chart. Now it's time to read the book. As you read, point out that the headings tell you what is to come. When you are finished, hand out a dry erase board and ask the class to write down one thing that they learned from reading the book. Go back to the K-W-L chart and see if the text affirmed what you know. Then look at the "W" column. Ask the class if the text answered what we wanted to know. Finally, go to the "L" column and have the students share what they've written on the dry erase board and discuss as a class. Fill up the "L" column with class responses. Post the K-W-L chart in the class next to the Concept Board. Give class a reading response journal for reflection.
Activity Three: 1. Have several sentences written on the board, some fact and some opinion. (In our fourth grade curriculum, we have covered fact and opinion every week and only need a review.) Ask them to define fact and opinion. Ask the class to decide if these sentences are fact or opinion and why. Then, review facts we know and learned from the previous reading. Tell the students, "Today, we are making a flipchart of facts about the Statue of Liberty, so listen carefully for facts to write in your chart." 2. Reread the text, stopping at the end of each section. Then, talk about the content that was read and ask if are there any facts? 3. When done reading, pass out a construction paper. Have the students fold it "hotdog style" or horizontally. Hold the "hotdog" straight up and down, and cut one side of the folded paper into 5 equal sections. A finished flipchart should already be completed to use as a model. Label each cut strip as "Fact One," "Fact Two," "Fact Three," "Fact Four," and "Fact Five." Have the students write a fact that they've learned under each cut strip. Monitor progress by walking around the room. Have students present their facts to the class. 4. Have the class fill out section two of their reading response journals.
Activity Four: 1. Review the text features on the Concept Board. Talk about the features that we've read in other books. Ask if there are new features that we haven't seen that may be in this book. 2. Reread "The Statue of Liberty." This time, stop at the text features and discuss their purpose. Ask the class to tell you what feature you would use if, a. you want to know on which page do they talk about the torch? (index) b. you want to know what the word "pedestal" means? (glossary) c. you want to know what major event happened after 1870? (timeline) d. you want to know what page the section on "The Big Idea" begins? (table of contents) e. What are the words on page 9 called (caption), and what does it say about the picture? 3. After talking about the text features, play a game called "Flyswatter." I have talked to other teachers who play variations of this game. Tape pictures of text features to the wall or board. Divide the class into two teams. Each team gets a flyswatter to smack the correct image when they hear a description of the text feature. 4. When the game is complete, have the students go back to their seats and complete the third reading response log, which relates to text features.

Lesson Plan Five: George Washington
Rationale: The fourth text selected is from the Scholastic Rookie biographies ™ series and is about George Washington. This series is easily comprehendible text. George Washington is not specifically covered in the ESL or North Carolina curriculum in fourth grade; however, he is a key figure in U.S. history that would behoove ESL students to know more about.
Objective: To show the elements of a biography and be able to write questions to create a biography.
Materials: George Washington by Wil Mara, vocabulary picture cards, vocabulary word cards, one U.S. dollar, overhead timeline diagram, pictures with captions of your life, sentence strips and markers
Vocabulary Words: president, "Father of Our Country," colonist, military, politician, government, England, country, farmer, capital, hero, Washington D.C.
Concepts of Lesson: There is a time sequence to writing a biography. It can be illustrated by a timeline, where dates can only occur in one order.
Activity One: 1. Pre-teach these vocabulary words. They are very content-specific. Write the vocabulary words on the board. Say the words in the list. Have the class repeat the words. Say each word again, show the pictures and ask the class if they know what the words means. Write the definitions on the board next to the word. Have the students write the definition in their vocabulary journals. 2. Show the cover of the book with George Washington. Ask the students if anyone recognizes this person. Compare this picture to the dollar bill. Tell the class this was our first president and today we are going to learn about his life. We're going to read a biography, which is a story about a real person's life. Pass out the vocabulary cards to the students and tell them to hold up the card when they hear it in the story. Take the opportunity to further define the vocabulary word. At the end of the story, ask the students to volunteer one fact they've learned from the reading. 3. Pass out reading response logs to the students for reflection.
Activity Two: 1. Place vocabulary picture cards around the room before students arrive. Pass out the vocabulary word cards to each student. One by one, direct the students to say their vocabulary word and find the picture that matches on the wall. 2. Tell the students that we're going to reread George Washington. After we're finished, we are going to create a timeline of his life from the dates and facts in the story. Read the story. Place a timeline diagram on the overhead. Read the story again, writing down dates as they come up in the story. Ask the students where to place the next date on the timeline. When the book gives the date, ask the class to figure out his age. When the book gives George Washington's age, ask the class to calculate the date for the timeline. Once the timeline is completed, retell the story of his life. 3. Ask the students to fill out their second entry in their reading response logs.
Activity Three: 1. Review the story, George Washington using the overhead timeline from the previous activity. Remind the class that this is a bibliography about George Washington's life. Redefine bibliography with the class. Ask the class to write the word "bibliography" in their vocabulary journal. Look at the timeline again. Ask what happened in George Washington's life in 1732, 1759, 1783, 1789 and 1799? 2. Tell them, "Now we're going to look at my life." Tell them that I need a title for me timeline.

Take suggestions and decide. Draw a timeline on the board. Show the class the pictures of your life from youngest to oldest tell the class about your life: birth, graduation of high school, graduation of college, marriage, children's births, etc. Ask the students what you should write on the timeline and where to put the pictures. Try to put the pictures in the incorrect order. Have them correct you and then ask why. Talk about why the order is important in a timeline. When the timeline is completed, ask questions: "When was Mrs. Stamey born?" (Model the first one) I was born in 1967. "When did Mrs. Stamey graduate from high school and go to college?" "When did Mrs. Stamey get married to Mr. Stamey?" "When did Mrs. Stamey have her oldest child?" "When did Mrs. Stamey graduate college?" "When did Mrs. Stamey have her youngest child?" Tell them now it's their turn to tell their story. "We're going to ask each other questions about our lives. This is called interviewing. Interviewing is when people ask other people questions. Here is a guide with questions to ask. Let's practice." 1. When were you born? 2. When did you come to the United States? 3. When did you start coming to this school? 4. When will you graduate high school? Tell the class, "You are in 4th grade now. You will graduate high school in 12th grade. Who can tell me when you will graduate high school?" Have the students work in pairs to ask each other questions. Everyone should be listening, engaged and waiting patiently for their turn. Monitor the oral production. The students will be writing down the answers to their partner's questions. 3. When the interviewing is done, give the students sentence strips and markers to create timelines of their partner's life. Self Check List for Timeline • Do I have a title for the timeline? • Are my dates ranging from oldest to most recent? • Does each date has a complete sentence that describes what is happening on that date? 4. Ask the students to present their partner's timelines. Make sure they are pointing to the date on the timeline that they are describing.
Activity Four: 1. Reread the "biography" of George Washington. After the story, ask the class some what are some things that are in a biography. What did we learn about George Washington from reading this story? (birthday, when he got married, when he became president, when he died) Tell the class that they are going to create a biography of the principal of our school and we're going to brainstorm some questions to ask her. Brainstorm a list of questions on the board, referring to the story if necessary. Have the class write down five questions they would like to ask the principal. 2. Have the students do part three of the response log for reflection.
Activity Five: 1. Take out the five questions that were chosen from the previous activity. Have the students practice saying the questions to each other. Walk around the room listening for pronunciation. 2. Invite the principal to the classroom for the interview. Before the interview, ask the principal to speak a bit slower for the students if necessary. Have the students take turns asking questions and writing down the answer. If other students ask the same question, they can write the answer down and do not have to ask that question due to the fact that it has already been answered. Try to create a casual atmosphere to help with possible anxiety.
Activity Six: 1. Using the interview questions from the previous activity, ask the students to write a paragraph about the principal. Self-check for Biography • I wrote 5 to 7 sentences about our principal. • All my sentences start with capitals. • All my sentences have periods. • I have at least 3 dates in my

paragraph.
Activity 7: 1. Have the students open up a word document so they can type their biography. Teach them how to center a title with the alignment icon in the toolbar, indent a paragraph using tab key and preview their document before printing. Print the final biography and keep for the final project.

Hurricanes
Lesson Plan Six: Severe Weather
Rationale: The fifth and last book in our unit is from Scholastic's Speedy Facts™ series and is titled Hurricanes Have Eyes But Can't See and Other Amazing facts About Wild Weather by Melvin and Gilda Berger. In the fourth grade ESL Avenues curriculum, we study severe weather. The theme of this book compliments the unit nicely.
Objective: To teach severe weather vocabulary and how to create a graph.
Materials: Hurricanes Have Eyes But Can't See and Other Amazing Facts About Wild Weather by Melvin and Gilda Berger, vocabulary picture cards, vocabulary word cards, CD of a thunderstorm, CD of wind blowing, worksheet of vocabulary words with no definitions, two sheets with the vocabulary definitions, a stack of sticky notes, butcher paper, overheads of three simple bar graphs, graph paper for each student, the demographic total for males and females in the school, check list for creating a graph, access to computer for each student
Vocabulary Words: lightning, thunder, monsoon, hurricane, tornado, blizzard, avalanche, ice, drought, hail, fog, snow, rain, cloud, wind, funnel
Activity One: 1. Play the CD of the thunderstorm. Tell the students not to talk, only look and listen. Show them the pictures of the rain, lightning and thunder. Stop the CD and talk about what you heard. What images did you see in your head? (point to your head and close your eyes) Then play the CD of the wind blowing. Show the picture of wind. Show the picture of a blizzard. Stop the CD and ask what they saw in their head. Ask students, "Could it have been snow blowing around? Could it have been a blizzard?" 2. Write the vocabulary words on the board. Introduce each word with a picture card and a gesture that represents that word. Have the students mimic the gestures as you say the words. Shuffle the picture cards. When you show the picture, say the word and the students will do the gesture. Then, pass out the cards to the students. Have the students call on someone to show the card to so they can gesture. 3. Show the students the book. Flip through the book to show the text features. Talk about the features and find them on the Concept Board. 4. Read the book straight through. Take questions at the end. Review the vocabulary words we heard in the book. 5. Distribute reading response logs to students to do for reflection.
Activity Two: 1. Before class, place the two sheets of vocabulary definitions card in opposite corners of the classroom. Divide the class into two teams. Pass out a worksheet that has all the vocabulary words, but a blank space for the definitions. The students will run relays to their assigned corners to memorize one definition and tell it to the person writing down the definition. The students will rotate which allows each player to take turns to run to the corner and be the scribe. 2. Have the class look at the Concept Board. Quiz the students on the different text features and why we use them. Focus on graphs. Tell them that the book we're reading has lots of graphs. Ask them to look for

the graphs as we reread the book. When you come to a graph in the book, analyze the information with the class. What is it telling us? We can still read a graph even though it doesn't have sentences. It tells us information. 3. Tell the class that we're going to create a graph. Draw a blank bar graph on butcher paper. Write the words Spring, Summer, Winter, and Fall on the bottom line of the graph and numbers 1-10 on the left side of the graph. Give everyone a sticky note. Ask them to write down their favorite season and place their sticky note above the season they chose. Talk about the test results. How many people chose summer? How do you know? 4. Ask the students to complete entry two of the reading response journal.
Activity Three: 1. Review vocabulary by calling on a student to come up and gesture vocabulary words while the class guesses the word. Give each student a chance. 2. Place a bar graph on the overhead. Practice reading the graph, by having students go to the board and point out parts of the graph. Repeat with the other two overheads. 3. Tell the students that I have secret information that I want to graph, but I'm not sure that I can tell the class. Can I trust you not to tell? Ok then, the secret is that I know how many girls are in the school and how many boys are in the school. Which do you predict will be greater, the number of girls or the number of boys? How would we set up our graph? What would our graph look like? Set up the graph so the bars are different colors for each gender. Make sure to have numbers on the left to tell how many. Model the graph on the overhead, while walking around to monitor the class. Make sure the grade totals that you give them are rounded to the tens for easier graphing. 4. When the students have completed their graphs, have them exchange with a peer to evaluate. Give the students this checklist to use: Peer Check List for Graph Are both of the bars labeled? Are the bars different colors? Are there numbers on the left side of the graph? Can I read the numbers? Is there a title for the graph? 5. Return the graphs to the owners and the students who checked have to tell one nice comment about the graph when they return it.
Activity Four: 1. Place a bar graph overlay on the overhead. Ask the students questions about the graph. Tell the students that we are going to create a bar graph on the computer today. The graph will show the boys and girls population at our school. Brainstorm some titles with the class and write those on the board. 2. Have the students log on the computers and open up an excel sheet. When the prompt for the heading comes, have the students select one of the headings from the board. Then write the word "boys" in the first cell and the number of boys underneath that cell. Then go back to the cell with the word "boys", space to the right one cell and type "girls" and the number of girls underneath that. 3. Click on Chart Wizard in the tool bar. The icon looks like a bar graph. Click on bar graph and click next. The bar graph should automatically populate. Print the bar graph and collect for the final project. 4. Have the students quiz each other on their vocabulary. Their ticket out the door is to give me a definition for a vocabulary word. I'll stand at the door and ask each student a vocabulary word to define.

Final Project: Student Written Non-Fiction Book
Background: There are several parts of the final project that have already been completed: a school map, a graph of girl and boy population for each grade, "How to Eat

Lunch at Torrence Creek Elementary," descriptions of four school workers, and a biography of the school principal. In order to finish our project, we need to complete the following: Book cover, title page, table of contents, and glossary.
Objective: To create a non-fiction text about the school and explain the function of the text features utilized in the book.
Materials: 15-20 non-fiction texts, computer for each student, 11 x 8 ½ white hardcover blank book for each student (available at Amazon and elsewhere), one completed non-fiction book, a pack of sticky notes for each student, fine tip black marker for each student
Activity One: 1. Have the students sit on the carpet with 15-20 non-fiction books scattered around for their use. Tell them that you are going to point to a text feature on the Concept Board and you would like to see if someone can find the feature in one of the books on the floor. Once someone finds the feature, ask if they can tell the class what the feature is called and what information does it tell. 2. Tell the class, "We have been studying many non-fiction books. Non-fiction books are very important because they tell us information. Now that we've studied lots of non-fiction books, we're going to make a non-fiction book about our school." Preview and read the completed non-fiction text. Ask them if any of the pages look familiar. (The book contains pages from previous assignments.) Tell them they have already completed much of their book. Give them a checklist to monitor progress. Self Check List for Non-fiction Book The cover of the book has a design or picture. The cover has a title and author name. The title page has a title and author name and is the first page of the book. The title page has no page number. Table of contents is done and is the second page of the book. The school map is included and has a page number. The graph of the number of boys and girls is included and has a page number. The biography is included and has a page number. The directions on "How to Eat Lunch" are included and have a page number. The descriptions of school worker jobs are included and have a page number. The pages after the title page are numbers and in numerical order. The glossary is alphabetized with definitions and is the last page of the book. Read the checklist with the class. Pass out the blank books and sticky notes. Have the students plan out the book, marking each page with a page number and description of what they are planning for that page. Pass out the assignments already completed. They should start to have a vision of the book. 3. Tell them to think of a title. A title should tell the reader what the book is about. Ask them to complete the title page with a black fine tip marker. Suggest using a pencil first to minimize mistakes. 4. Have them map out the table of contents. Tell them the titles of their work should be listed in the table according to page number order. Write the titles on the left and the page numbers on the right. Again, tell them to write the table first in pencil, and then write in black fine tip marker. 5. Number the pages of the following pages in black fine tip marker. 6. Ask the students what should go last in the book. (glossary). "What information does a glossary tell?" (It defines unknown words.) Start a list on the board to model the glossary. Tell the students to list 8 – 10 words that they learned from making the book and find the definitions in their vocabulary journals. Walk around the room to monitor progress. Let the students know that when you approve their list and definitions, they can add the glossary to their books. 7. When the books are completed, have a reading in the

classroom to share the books. Invite parents and staff that can come. 8. Ask the media specialist if the class can display the books in the media center. Write a display board to put behind the books telling about non-fictions books and text features.

Notes

North Carolina Public Schools. "North Carolina Public Schools." HYPERLINK "http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/2008ncscos.pdf" http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/2008ncscos.pdf.

Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada, *How Languages Are Learned* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 39.

WIDA Consortium. "WIDA: Standards." HYPERLINK "http://www.wida.us/standards/" http://www.wida.us/standards/.

Linda Hoyt, *Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Texts* (Heineman, 2002), 4.

Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 149.

Hoyt, *Make It Real*, 2.

Ibid, 3.

Ibid, 61.

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Robert M.Vanderburg, "Reviewing Research on Teaching Writing Based on Vygotsky's Theories: What We Can Learn," *Reading & Writing Quarterly* 22, No. 4 (2006).

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Ibid, 96.

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Shin, Sarah J. "Learning to Teach Writing Through Tutoring and Journal Writing." *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 12, no. 3 (2006): 325-345.

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Wade, Mary Dodson. *Types of Maps*. New York: Children's Press, 2003.

"WIDA: Standards." WIDA Consortium.
HYPERLINK "http://www.wida.us/standards/" http://www.wida.us/standards/ (accessed September 12, 2010)

Teacher Resources

Dorfman, Lynne R. and Rose Cappelli. *Nonfiction Mentor Texts: Teaching Information Writing Through Children's Literature, K-8*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2009.

Dorfman and Cappelli provide in depth lesson plans to teach writing and craft elements using children's literature. For each lesson plan, a list of recommended texts is provided. The book also includes a "A Treasure Chest of Books" which is a list of non-fiction mentor texts and the writing element they exemplify.

Ehman, Susan and Kellyann Gayer. *I Can Write Like That! A Guide to Mentor Texts and Craft Studies for Writers' Workshop, K-6*. Newark: International Reading Association, 2009.

Ehman and Gayer suggest a list of fiction and non-fiction mentor text and correlating craft elements that can be taught in the classroom. The book also gives a brief definition and synopsis of the craft elements with examples.

Hoyt, Linda. *Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Texts*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002.

Hoyt creates a wonderful resource for reading and writing with non-fiction mentor text. She gives lesson plans ideas with illustrations, as well as useful reproducibles to implement strategies.

Student Resources

"Google Maps". Google.
HYPERLINK "http://maps.google.com" http://maps.google.com

Google Maps is a great technological adaptation to “Lesson Plan Three: Maps.”

“Time for Kids”. Time.com
HYPERLINK "http://www.timeforkids.com" http://www.timeforkids.com

“Time for Kids” is an age appropriate source for students to keep with current events. There are activities to practice reading timelines that complement “Lesson Plan Five: George Washington.”

“Statue of Liberty”. New York City Architecture.com
HYPERLINK "http://www.nyc-architecture.com/LM/LM002-STATUEOFLIBERTY.htm"
http://www.nyc-architecture.com/LM/LM002-STATUEOFLIBERTY.htm

This website has various pictures of the Statue of Liberty from when the statue was being built until modern day. There is also informational data and historical facts. This is a great non-fictional resource that enhances “Lesson Plan Four: Statue of Liberty.”