



Connecting Feelings and Memories

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Writing in grades K-2

Keywords: memoir, author, daybook, writing workshop, feelings/emotions, memories, writing process, revise, edit, publish

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: *Connecting Feelings and Memories* will be the first unit taught in Writer's Workshop. It will set the expectations and tone for writing time, while allowing you to get to know your students. The goal of this unit is to give your students a voice when it comes to writing. This unit will create a safe writing environment where students feel secure to write and share their feelings and memories. By including various mentor texts from culturally diverse authors students will not only be exposed to a new genre, but also have the opportunity to make connections through feelings, lifestyles, and personal experiences. Throughout the unit, writing activities and techniques will be used to introduce and guide students through the writing process.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 17 students in my first grade classroom. I will be sharing this unit with 5 additional first grade teachers on my team, as well as offering it to the kindergarten and second grade teams to use in their classrooms.

I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Introduction

In my opinion writing has always been one of the most challenging yet most exciting subjects to teach, which is why I chose to apply to CTI's "Writing About Our Lives" seminar. This journey taught me so much about who I am as a writer. It helped me see I was never a "bad" writer, rather I felt I never had anything worth writing about. So I fell out of touch with the act of writing. I have learned teaching writing is less challenging and more enjoyable when you are practicing alongside your children writing about things matter most. As an elementary teacher, I've learned kids love to write about themselves, but often don't get the chance with the units we teach. Students are forced to write only about the designated areas of study. Research can be daunting if students don't find something of interest to them on Pebble Go or in the classroom library. At age 7 they can only write so many "How To" pieces. Narratives sound promising, but then they can't be in their own stories and small moments can be so restricting. This seminar allowed me to create a unit of study where my students had the opportunity to share their stories in the truest sense. It allowed them to be creative and share meaningful and memorable moments where they learned more about themselves. It exposed them to new genres of reading, provided them with the opportunity to make meaningful connections, and helped some begin to identify themes in their own lives. Not only did I create this unit for my students and future students, but I also created it for myself. Being apart of the "Writing About Our Lives" seminar and writing my own unit helped me learn to love writing again, which will hopefully guide my students in developing a genuine love for the act as well.

Rationale

I am creating this unit so my first grade students can learn more about who they are and feel safe and comfortable sharing their stories. We spend so much time in first grade getting to know the characters in our stories - their feelings, traits, interests, and motivations, and I feel I sometimes miss out on getting to know who my students are as people. I want them to have the opportunity to write about what matters most, not just writing responses for a test score. I believe it will help teach them although they may look different from one another they may have memories and experiences in common. I hope teaching this unit will allow my students to open up as a person, classmate, friend, and a writer.

Demographics

I am currently in my fourth year of teaching first grade at Oakhurst Steam Academy. Oakhurst STEAM Academy is a K-5 magnet school serving approximately 665 students. It is the first elementary magnet school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District to integrate the aspects of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). The student population is approximately 44% African American, 29% Hispanic, 18% Caucasian, 5% Asian, 3% Multi-Racial, and less than 1% American Indian. We serve approximately 90 students with disabilities, 167 English Language Learners, and 34 students are enrolled in the Talent Development program.

In my first grade classroom I currently have 17 students. I teach all subjects throughout the school day using the revised Common Core State Standards. I incorporate various literacy based methods including: Balanced Literacy, Letterland flex grouping, concepts from the Lucy Calkins Units of Study, conferring and guided reading. Over the past three years I have created the Reader's Workshop lesson plans for our first grade team working closely with our literacy facilitator. I also spent this summer working for the district on the revised Scope and Sequence, or the new Elementary Literacy Guidelines, working specifically on the writing performance tasks and reading standards based assessments. At Oakhurst there is still a heavy emphasis on reading comprehension based on TRC testing in first grade, however, working at a STEAM school has provided me with some flexibility when planning for my students. This is why I knew creating a new writing curriculum unit would be ideal for my students and myself as a lifelong learner.

Unit Goals

During our first writing unit in first grade students are asked to write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal transition words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure. We will use this standard to guide our writing process, but will focus more on the feelings and reflection aspect in order to take personal narrative and create a memoir.

At this time of year students will also be learning about retelling stories and describing characters, setting, and key events. We will explore these standards through mentor texts to learn how the author's feelings can change over the course of a memoir. This will assist students in personal reflection when writing about their own memories. In the past we have typically waited to explore the strategy of making inferences by identifying feeling and sensory words. However, in order for students to include feelings without explicitly stating we will closely observe mentor texts and how the authors use the strategy of "Show Not Tell" when reflecting on their feelings about a particular memory. We will also briefly touch upon point of view in order for students to understand they are telling their own story and it should be in first person perspective.

In my classroom building a community is essential. A strong classroom community lets students know they are safe, supported, allowed to make mistakes, and yields an overall positive learning environment. By creating a writing community students will feel comfortable with sharing their memoirs. Incorporating share time and author's chair will be imperative so students can engage in collaborative conversations and feel comfortable to ask and answer questions with their peers.

Being in a STEAM school also allows for flexible creativity with this unit. Students will be exposed to several graphic novel memoirs and utilize our one to one technology to create their own graphic novel version of their published memoir.

Refer to *Appendix 1 : Teaching Standards* for details regarding specific standards.

Content Research

For our first seminar meeting we were asked to bring a daybook. Dr. Kissel, our seminar leader, explained to us the daybook we chose would be where we would house all of our writing. He informed us today we would write about a place and told us not to think too much into it, but rather just write whatever came to mind. Then he set a timer and told us to begin. I realized I hadn't done much writing as an adult besides lesson plans and a few letters here and there. After a few moments of writers block I began to write about my Nan's house. As I was writing I remembered this was also a place I chose to write about for an essay in middle school. Not only did this writing bring back the memory of my favorite place as a child, but it also brought me back to the memory of winning an award for the essay, a memory of my Nan asking for a copy and framing it in her home, a memory of going through my Nan's apartment after she passed away and taking framed piece for my own home. This first exercise showed me the power of memoir and the importance of being a writer myself.

In *Rafting Down Rivers of Memory*, Katherine Bomer poses the question, "Why would anyone want to write down memories?"¹ I thought about this for a while thinking - what memories are important enough to write about, or can't we just rely on pictures to remember things? In another article by Katherine Bomer, *Why Teach Memoir*, she answers this original question beautifully by saying, "To write one's life is to live it twice."² I've learned through my experience writing down memories brings out so many details I missed or overlooked. Writing down memories brings out the powerful tool of reflection, which we learned in seminar is key because the you now helps the reader understand your journey. This posed another question for me - What does reflection look like in a first grade classroom? As I paged through my daybook I continued to see this question staring back at me. I learned for many writers it seems events trigger feelings (reflection) and in turn creates a memoir. However, I didn't want to give my students an event to write about or a prompt to follow. After reading numerous picture book memoirs I noticed how I could relate to every text through the feelings and emotions the characters were experiencing, and in first grade we spend so much time focusing on characters and their emotions. The lightbulb went off and I knew my students would begin with a feeling and from their dive into their memories.

After learning more about memoir in general I started to ponder what this genre was going to look like for first graders. In *Teaching Memoir in the Elementary School Classroom*, Tara Gibney states memoir is an, "accessible genre for all students because everyone has a story to tell."³ I thought back to previous years and how I always began the year with personal narratives. I taught students how to choose one small moment and stretch it out of the course of 3-5 pages, how to incorporate a beginning and end, and how to use transition words. I now realize I focused so much on the structure I can honestly say I do not remember one personal narrative a student wrote. My hope is this unit will be meaningful and help give these children a voice to share who they are outside of being a student at Oakhurst. Katie Van Sluys states, "Classrooms that begin with children's lives create spaces where children write from the life that surrounds them, construct significant texts, and tell stories that invoke history, culture, and difference. An

¹ Katherine Bomer, *Rafting Down Rivers of Memory*, p. 3

² Katherine Bomer, *Why Teach Memoir*, p. 11

³ Tara Gibney, *Teaching Memoir in the Elementary School Classroom*, p.2

in telling the stories of their “true lives” they explore not only who they are but also who they might become.”⁴

Because writing memoirs was new to my students I knew there would be a need for mentor texts. Cecilia M. Espinosa recommends we should, “Engage kids with a particular unit of study by having them explore it and create their own personal connections.”⁵ After speaking with Dr. Kissel I understood the importance of strategically choosing mentor texts. For my unit they had to elicit different feelings for my students. It was important the texts also showed a change in feelings, which targeted the reflection piece. The mentor texts also needed to be culturally diverse based on my classroom make up and show a variety of experiences. I decided to go with three texts for our pre-writing portion of the unit- *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant, *The Leaving Morning* by Angela Johnson, *My Very Own Room* by Amada Irma Perez. “In addition to professional authors serving as mentors, student writers serve as mentors for one another. Student writers in any grade level borrow ideas from one another, and we set up classrooms to encourage them to do so.”⁶

In order for students to share personal stories a few things must happen. Students must see themselves and their teachers as writers. I haven’t been an avid writer in my adult life, and when it came to free writing in front of my students they could tell. How could I get my students to love and appreciate writing if I didn’t? Writing *About Our Lives* taught me the importance of writing, not just as a teacher but also as a person. Keeping a daybook made a huge improvement in my own writing, so I decided to incorporate it in my classroom this year. I remember asking Dr. Kissel, “What if the children just decide to draw?” He responded, “Let them.” This was way out of my comfort zone, but I can tell you students who were just drawing are now writing and students who were writing are now doing so much more.

In Lil Brannon’s book *Thinking Out Loud on Paper* she explains daybooks are a place to hold onto children’s thoughts and notes they discover throughout the day.⁷ They energize our teaching, give students voice and authority over their writing, and fill our classroom with exciting ideas.⁸ I introduced daybooks to my students by bringing in my own. I showed them my drawings, lists, timeline, various writings, stapled in pages, and pointed out the slightly organized messiness of it all. Showing them my daybook made them realize it wasn’t meant to be perfect. It showed them I am not just their teacher but also a person and a writer. “Students love to hear about teachers’ lives. Sharing our stories no matter the age of our students is what connects students and their teachers to daybooks.”⁹ We talked about the different things housed in our daybooks and decided the number one goal of having a daybook is to help the children see themselves as writers just like the daybook had done for me.

⁴ Katie Van Sluys, *Writing and Identity Construction: A Young Author’s Life in Transition*, p.8

⁵ Cecilia M. Espinosa, *Finding Memorable Moments: Images and Identities in Autobiographical Writing*, p.3

⁶ Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-vision Student Led Agendas*, p.5

⁷ Lil Brannon, *Thinking Out Loud on Paper*, p.4

⁸ Lil Brannon, *Thinking Out Loud on Paper*, p.8

⁹ Lil Brannon, *Thinking Out Loud on Paper*, p.27

If we want students to write personal memoirs they must feel comfortable and view the classroom as a safe writing community. In *Teaching Memoir in the Elementary School Classroom* Tara Gibney talks about creating a friendly, warm atmosphere. She explains before students share their memoirs you must discuss and share the risks we need to take as a memoirist as well as the type of audience we need to be to support everyone. Cecilia M. Espinosa introduces the idea of sharing orally with a partner first. She explains this will allow students to ask thoughtful questions to elicit more detail. It will assist in creating an environment full of storytellers, caring and active listeners, and provide all writers with an abundance of stories to share.¹⁰

Through our seminar I learned sharing can help writers make connections. For our second seminar we were asked to bring in an object was important to us. As each person introduced their object and its significance we were asked to jot down any connections we had. It was astounding to think a woman's red purse brought back the memory of my aunt giving me a red bag for Christmas 6 years ago after I was hired for my first teaching job. I still remember her saying, "Every teacher needs a good bag." This activity showed me how one person's object, photo, or story can help others "uncover what had been forgotten memories."¹¹ Tara Gibney states the sharing process will allow students to experience "me too" moments when sharing and listening to each others stories. "Although all stories are unique, they can also reveal intriguing commonalities that bind humans together."¹²

A new sharing strategy I will incorporate in this unit is the Author's Chair. Author's Chair is a genuine experience where students have a variety of ways to share and respond to one another's memoirs. "Each author who shares learns from the responses he or she receives from the audience. And, importantly, the audience members, by learning from the authors/authorities in their class, gain ideas for their upcoming drafts."¹³ Author's chair is significant for the author because they get to decide what type of response they would like from their audience. This assists in guiding their writing for the following day. During author's chair time teachers should remain silent and actively listen. This takes time to set up. "He/she teaches the Authors what to say when they request a response, and he/she teaches the responders how to gather around the Chair, to keep their eyes on the Author, and to respond in whatever fashion is appropriate for that Author."¹⁴ This allows students to have ownership over their sharing and gives teachers valuable information on what they can work on with students when conferring.

When researching writing workshop for elementary writers I learned the importance of letting your students just write. The prewriting and drafting phase is essential. In *Writers Workshop Using Retro Ideas*, the authors talked about how during author's chair a teacher reminded herself to ask questions near the end of a draft, not at the beginning when students are starting to put

¹⁰ Cecilia M. Espinosa, *Finding memorable Moments: Images and Identities in Autobiographical Writing*, p. 2

¹¹ Cecilia M. Espinosa, *Finding Memorable Moments: Images and Identities in Autobiographical Writing*, p.5

¹² Tara Gibney, *Teaching Memoir in the Elementary School Classroom*, p.2

¹³ Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-evision Student Led Agendas* , p.9

¹⁴ Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-evision Student Led Agendas* , p.10

down their thoughts on a topic.¹⁵ Drafting time allows students to feel like authors and build confidence in their writing ability. In this unit students have 2-3 weeks for their brainstorming and drafting. Students are listening to various mentor texts, reflecting on feelings to elicit memories, creating feelings webs with those memories attached, and taking their ideas and creating memoirs. During this phase of writing we shouldn't push students to use a process. "We expect them to use whatever process they are able to use to get that done. Once they are up and writing, then we'll begin to watch them closely and teach into what we see them doing (and not doing), helping them refine all the ways they go about writing - from ideas to finished pieces."¹⁶

The next phase in this unit is revision. Revision is not the same as editing. Revision is when students choose one piece they would like to publish. The teacher takes all the things he/she has noticed as students have been writing and sharing, and then uses a process to teach students how they can enhance their writing by using these specific strategies. In this unit mentor texts, authors chair, and student writing samples will be used during the revision stage. Students will learn about writing beginnings and ending, providing structure, "show not tell," incorporating descriptive words and feelings vocabulary, and reflection in the sense of, What are your thoughts about this now? Revision is described as a big task, especially for elementary students. "The writer who is revising is riding on a time machine of sorts as he makes the move from thinking of the text as something he is writing (present), to thinking of it as something that will be read (future). He is trying to understand the text as it exists in both these times. It's a complex thought process."¹⁷ Katie Wood Ray also emphasizes the importance of kids talking about their memoir as much as possible, especially during the revision stage. She explains at this age students have many ideas not represented with words, and our goal isn't to capture all their thinking in words. But when students are able to talk about their writing there are opportunities to add simple revisions.¹⁸

Once we have finished our revision stage students will move on to the editing phase. My students carry an editing checklist with them every time they write. Before giving students the checklist I continuously model and address what these conventions look like in my writing, in student writing samples, and mentor texts. Students can then refer back to the checklist and make changes as needed. Katie Wood Ray explains a writer can't edit for what he doesn't know about how the language works. We can only fix things we know need fixing.¹⁹ With today's technology students will grow up in a world where a computer will fix their spelling mistakes for them and add punctuation as needed, but it is still beneficial for them to learn about the conventions of our language.

In this unit my students will explore a new way of publishing. In the past a typical day of publishing meant students created a front and back cover complete with a title and their name as the author and illustrator. Sometimes we shared with one another or another class. Their books then went into our classroom library for others to read. Looking back I thought to myself - How are students expected to be excited about a published piece when we do the same thing every

¹⁵ Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-evision Student Led Agendas*, p.10

¹⁶ Katie Wood Ray, *About the Authors*, p.59

¹⁷ Katie Wood Ray, *About the Authors*, p.71

¹⁸ Katie Wood Ray, *About the Authors*, p.72

¹⁹ Katie Wood Ray, *About the Authors*, p.74

time? For this unit we will be publishing our work in two ways. As students write their memoirs they will learn about graphic novels and explore the program Canva. Students will then recreate their revised memoir and publish it as a graphic novel online. I am a big believer in incorporating art wherever we can so students will also publish their memory and present it in a memory walk form. Students will assist each other in tracing their bodies and recreating life sized versions of themselves. This will be the vessel to hold their memoir and will be arranged in the school. We will hold a memory walk celebration inviting parents, administration, and other classes to see our students completed memoirs and graphic novels.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

A new strategy I am implementing in my class this year is the use of daybooks over a writing folder. Through out our seminar we have learned the importance of keeping a daybook and how it can be used as a thinking tool. In *From Workbook to Working Book* by Lil Brannon I learned a daybook is a place for writers to store all their writing on the way to creating a final product, and it shifts the focus from a writing product to the writing process. This will be important for students to understand, especially when they get to the revising and editing portion of our unit.

After reading numerous types of memoirs throughout our seminar I understood the importance of using mentor texts in my unit. With the focus of my unit being on feelings evoking memories I chose 3-4 mentor texts to read aloud and discuss with students prior to them creating their own feelings web. Upon reading *Writers' Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Reenvision Student-Led Agendas*, I learned the importance of choosing diverse mentor authors. My classroom has a multicultural population so I strategically chose authors who have varied backgrounds and experiences. The Mentor texts I chose were *My Very Own Room* by Amada Irma Perez, *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant, and *The Leaving Morning* by Angela Johnson. Each of these texts exhibited a different range of emotions and represented authors from different cultures. If I had more time I would have also incorporated *Thundercake* by Patricia Polacco and *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges.

Prewriting and drafting are the strategies that will take place following each mentor text read aloud and classroom discussion. Students will be introduced to memoir through Patricia's Polacco's "The Keeping Quilt." Students will create their own version of a keeping quilt in their daybook to draft memories as an introduction to memoir. Since this unit is focused on feelings evoking memories students will create a feelings web after each mentor text read aloud. This allows students to hone in on one feeling and brainstorm memories. The webs will then be used to draft memoirs.

Turn and talk is a strategy my students use throughout the school day across all subject areas. Turn and talk will often take place after the mini lesson to provide students with the opportunity to share their ideas and thinking with a peer or group of peers. Turn and talk will be a quick and easy, yet essential practice during memoir writing. "Young students talk about their writing is always bigger than the actual words on the page. We embrace this developmental truth and let

them talk about the bigger ideas are connected to their writing but aren't represented with words.”²⁰

Conferring is a strategy I originally only associated with reading. I've learned conferring in writing is imperative because each child can potentially be on a different stage in their writing process, especially in first grade. *Writers' Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Reenvision Student-Led Agendas* explains, “Writing conferences are as diverse as the students engaged within them.”²¹ It also states, “Students decide what they need to move forward as writers, make the request for assistance if they think they need help, and work to fulfill their goals.”²² This allows writers to have ownership over their writing. I have found conferring allows for one on one time for teacher and students, which can help build a safe writing and sharing relationship. I use a conferring sheet when meeting with kids independently to keep track of their areas of strength and their areas of need. I also use the conferring sheet to jot notes when students are sharing in Author's Chair so I know what to teach them when we meet for our one on one conference.

Writing Observation and Conferring Notes					
Student:	Date:	Student:	Date:	Student:	Date:
Compliment:		Compliment:		Compliment:	
Teach point:		Teach point:		Teach point:	
Next steps:		Next steps:		Next steps:	
Student:	Date:	Student:	Date:	Student:	Date:
Compliment:		Compliment:		Compliment:	
Teach point:		Teach point:		Teach point:	
Next steps:		Next steps:		Next steps:	

Strategy groups are small groups of students who are working on the same concept. By pulling a strategy group I can teach one skill or concept several students may be struggling with. I find strategy groups were extremely beneficial during the revising stage because some students were ready to move onto the next step while others may have needed more time or examples of a concept taught previously.

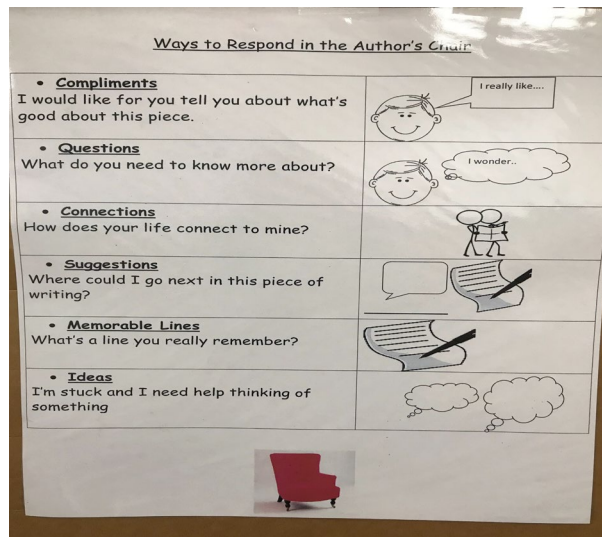
Author's chair is a strategy I have tried once or twice in the past but never with fidelity. I use it in this unit for several reasons. I mentioned early how important building a classroom community is. Author's chair allows students to build relationships and gain ideas from each other by sharing their memoirs and being able to ask and answer questions of one another. It also continues to give the writer ownership of their writing as they will decide what they want from the audience after sharing their piece. *The Author's Chair by Graves and Hansen* also informs us, “Children's concept of author changes from a vague notion about some other person who

²⁰ Katie Wood Ray, *About the Authors*, p.72

²¹ Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-evision Student Led Agendas*, p.7

²² Brian Kissel, Erin Miller, and Jane Hansen, *Writers Workshop - Using Retro Ideas to Re-evision Student Led Agendas*, p.7

writes books to the additional perception of themselves as authors to the realization that they have choices and decisions to make as authors.”²³



Revising is not a strategy and process I have taught in the past. Before attending our seminar and studying memoir I was under the impression revising and editing were the same thing. I have learned revising does not mean writers need to fix everything and it has nothing to do with conventions. It is the step writers take to enhance their memoir before editing and publishing. In this unit revision takes form in understanding the structure of the story. A memoir may not necessary have a defining beginning, middle, and end, but it will follow a sequence of events.

During the revision lessons students learn about the importance of using a hook when writing the beginning of their memoir to draw readers in. At this time we brought our mentor texts back out to see what published authors did to draw us in. Students also learn how to “Explode a Moment” by finding the heart of their memoir and stretching it out with details. The children brainstorm details using their five senses, which is something we practiced in seminar. They also reflect on the memory using a “Things on the Inside” sheet where they think back to things they did, said, thought, and felt. From here we moved onto the “Show Not Tell” strategy, which is described in the next paragraph.

The “Show Don’t Tell” strategy takes place during the revising stage. By using mentor texts students are familiar with, we focus on the art of creating inferences and how an author will use sensory words and descriptive language to show how they feel about their memory without telling. This strategy also helps students with the reflection aspect of writing a memoir. All of the characteristics of the revising stage are reinforced when students are presenting in the Author’s Chair. Here students assist others with feedback. This provides the teacher time to listen and take notes about strategies the whole class may needs or ideas needing reinforcement when conferring or pulling strategy groups.

²³ Graves and Hansen, *The Author's Chair*, p.8

Teacher rubrics and student checklists are used during the revision stage. The rubrics align with the strategies being taught, and the checklist is a version of the rubric in student friendly terms with photos. Students have the opportunity to work independently and with a peer to use the rubric as a tool to self assess their work and a partner's work. Copies of the rubric and checklist can be found in the assessment portion of the rubric.

Editing takes place during the second to last week of the unit. The students use an editing checklist targeting first grade reading foundational skills and print concepts.

Publication takes place at the end of the unit. Publication can look different based on the grade level, school, student interests, etc. In this unit publication will be influenced by the T (technology) and A (art) in STEAM. As students edit their work they begin creating a graphic novel representation of their memoir. Students also create a life sized artistic representation of themselves to "hold and keep" their memoir near their heart. The "student" and their memoir are arranged in the hallway for the students, families, and school community to participate in a "Mentor Memory Walk."

Lessons/Activities

In this unit every lesson follows the format below. Next to each piece is a short description of what each step entails.

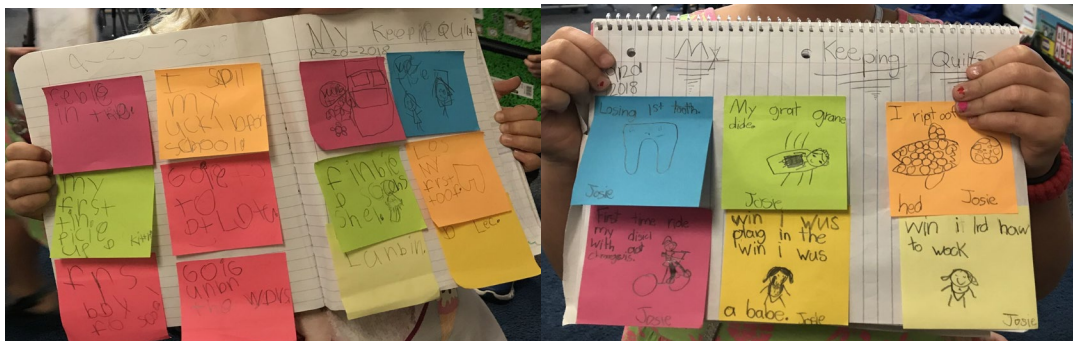
Standard(s): Standard(s) being taught to day
Student friendly objectives: "I can" statement matches objective
Connection: A few sentences explaining the purpose of today's lesson and how it relates to their life or a previous taught lesson
Teaching Point/Model: A statement explaining what the students will learn today and steps modeling how to teach this
Active Engagement: How the students will demonstrate they understood the teach point before they are released for independent practice
Link: Restating teach point and expectation for independent work
Sharing: How the students will share what they learned today
Resources: List of materials needed for daily lesson

Lesson - Daybooks - This is a procedural lesson where students are introduced to daybooks. The teacher should introduce his or her own daybook showing students the messiness and explain it's ok because the daybook is a place to hold all your thoughts, a safe place for writing, a safe place for sharing. Expectations should be limited but may include the following: write/draw in your

day book every day, write the date, don't skip pages. Students can then take time to decorate their day books to make it special.



Lesson - Creating a Keeping Quilt - This lesson is where students are first introduced to memoir. Explain memoirs are a type of writing where an author writes about their memories and ask, *“Why would anyone want to write down memories?”* Read “The Keeping Quilt” by Patricia Polacco and discuss how this quilt keeps so many special memories for Patricia and her family. Brainstorm kinds of memories we want to hold on to forever (big and small). Model how to create a “Keeping Quilt” using sticky notes in your daybook. Students will then create their own in their daybook. Explain students can use their keeping quilt for ideas to write about when they feel stuck.



Prewriting/Drafting Lessons - In the prewriting/drafting phase students are exposed to a variety of memoir mentor texts and student work samples through the read aloud strategy. After each read aloud we discuss the author's feelings and how they change throughout the memory. For reference *My Very Own Room* by Amada Irma Perez evoked a feeling of frustration which eventually turned to pride. *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant reminded students of happiness and feelings of being overjoyed. *The Leaving Morning* by Angela Johnson created the connection of feeling sadness and for some students a sense anger, reminding them of a big change in their own life.

Over the course of a few days a feelings web is modeled and then created by the students. Memories are drawn from feelings and then represented on the feelings web. Students use those memories from the feelings web to draft memoirs in their daybook. Each day students share their drafts in a variety of ways. Some days it may be with a partner and other days it may be whole group using the author's chair strategy mentioned above. The sharing process allowed students to make connections to one another as well as learn new things about their friends.

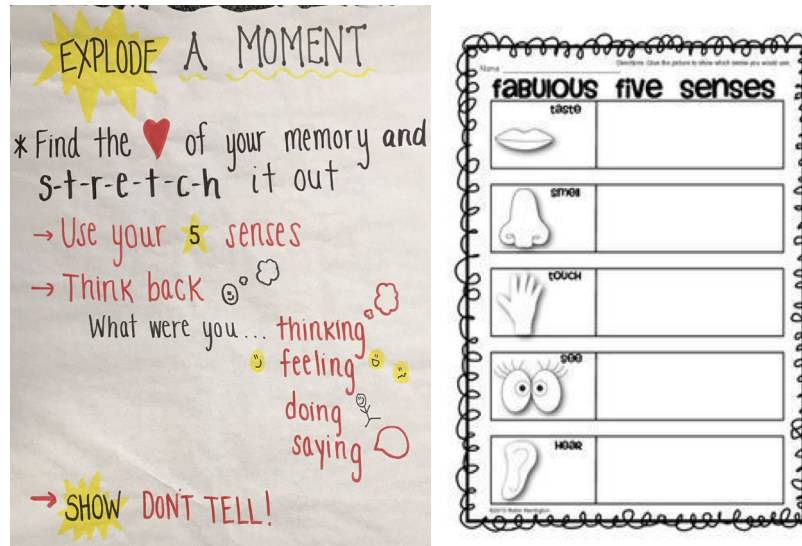
Revising Lessons- The following lessons are all a part of the revising phase. Before we begin students go through their daybooks and choose one memoir they would like to eventually publish. I explain to students before a book can be published it must be revised, which means we will continue to learn about the various aspects of memoir and use what we learn to improve our own writing.

Lesson - How To Hook Your Readers/Writing a Beginning - In this lesson mentor texts are revisited for students to explore different ways to begin their memoir. The anchor chart below is introduced in the beginning of the lesson, and as the texts are reviewed students discuss the various ways to hook a reader. The teacher assists by adding the examples to the anchor chart. Some of the ideas on the chart were not prevalent in the mentor texts so the teacher can create the examples using his or her memoir paired with student suggestions. All categories on the left of the anchor chart are taught indirectly when exploring mentor texts during the prewriting/drafting phase. After teacher modeling, students create their hook/beginning on a new colored sheet of paper for organization purposes. They use their rough draft along with ideas from the anchor chart, paired with retell knowledge they gain in reading.

HOOK your audience from the Beginning ★	
Setting	"I woke up one day in a crowded bed in a crowded room." "It was the summer of the year the relatives came. Virginia."
Sound Word	"The leaving happened on a soupy, misty morning when you could hear the street sweeper... shhshhshh."
Question	Whats that knocking at my door?
Dialogue / Speaking	"Happy Birthday, Meghan!" my mom yelled as I opened the door.

Lesson - Using 5 Senses to Add Details - Before this lesson begins the "Explode a Moment" anchor chart is introduced. The teacher explains and models how to find the "heart" of your memoir and why it's important to stretch it out. Students should be given time to review their memoir and turn with a partner stating the heart of their memoir.

The first technique, Using Your Five Senses, is then introduced. The five senses are a part of the kindergarten social studies curriculum in North Carolina and may have been pre-taught, but it's best to quickly review before diving into the organizer. The teacher models thinking back to the heart of his or her memory and fills in ideas remembered using the five senses. It's also important to point out not all five senses may have been used. Students should then fill in organizer using ideas from their rough draft and new ideas are recalled by the five senses.



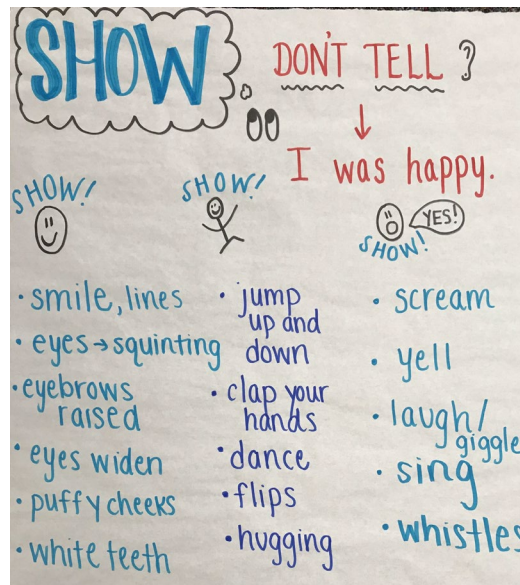
Lesson - Things on the Inside - In this lesson students continue to add details to the middle of their memoir. The “Explode a Moment” anchor chart is reviewed and the “Think Back” portion is added to the anchor chart introduced through the graphic organizer below. The teacher should model rereading the middle of his or her memoir rough draft pointing out things they remember thinking, feeling, doing, and saying, reminding students it’s ok if those details aren’t in the rough draft because we will be adding them to our organizer today. Students should then fill in organizer using ideas from their rough draft and new ideas they recall today.

Things on the Inside

I remember thinking...	I remember feeling...
I remember doing...	I remember saying...

Lesson - Show, Don’t Tell - In this lesson students learn about the difference between showing feelings instead of telling. Begin by reviewing the “Explode a Moment” anchor chart and the “I remember feeling” portion of yesterday’s organizer. A connection can be made for students is how author’s don’t usually say how a character is feeling, or how in our life we usually don’t walk around saying how we feel, instead we show it. The “Show, Don’t Tell” anchor chart is then introduced with just the sentence “I was happy.” Students are then prompted to act out silently how they show they are happy using facial expressions and actions. Ideas are shared and added to the chart. Next students vocally show ways they are happy without saying “I was

happy.” Ideas are shared and added to the chart. The students then have the opportunity to go back to their “Things on the Inside” organizer and choose one feeling to find ways to show instead of tell.

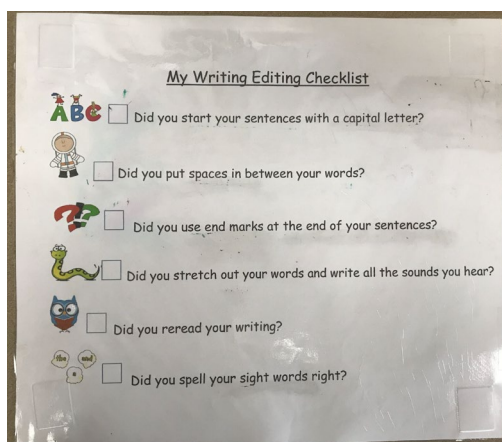


Lesson(s) - Revising the Middle by Adding Detail - This two day lesson teaches students how to take their rough draft and incorporate ideas from the organizers they have been working on. Teacher modeling is essential here so students can see how ideas can worked in as opposed to just listed or added in on the end of their original draft. For organization purposes it is helpful to recreate the middle on a different colored paper from the hook/beginning.

Lesson - Endings - In this lesson mentor texts are revisited for students to explore different ways to end their memoir. Students also learn about the idea of reflection - looking back on their memory from the life now and thinking about how they feel. For organization purposes it is helpful to recreate the end on a different colored paper from the hook/beginning and middle.

Editing Lessons - The next set of lessons tie in with the assessment portion. Before I have students write their final draft I introduce the student friendly checklist aligns with a level 3 (mastery) on the rubric. I invite all students to the carpet with their colored papers, which represents their second draft. We go through one section at a time and discuss what a 1, 2, and 3 look like before students grade themselves. It is also beneficial to have students pair up and go through one another's writing using the checklist then discuss why they gave one another a particular score. The students then have the opportunity to add or change things based on their checklist score.

After students have the opportunity to make changes we prepare for our final draft. Before this unit begins students are introduced and taught how to use the editing checklist shown below. Before writing the final draft we review the editing checklist and I encourage students to keep it out as a reminder as they write. When students are finished writing their final draft they go back through their writing with a partner and use the editing checklist to make any final corrections.

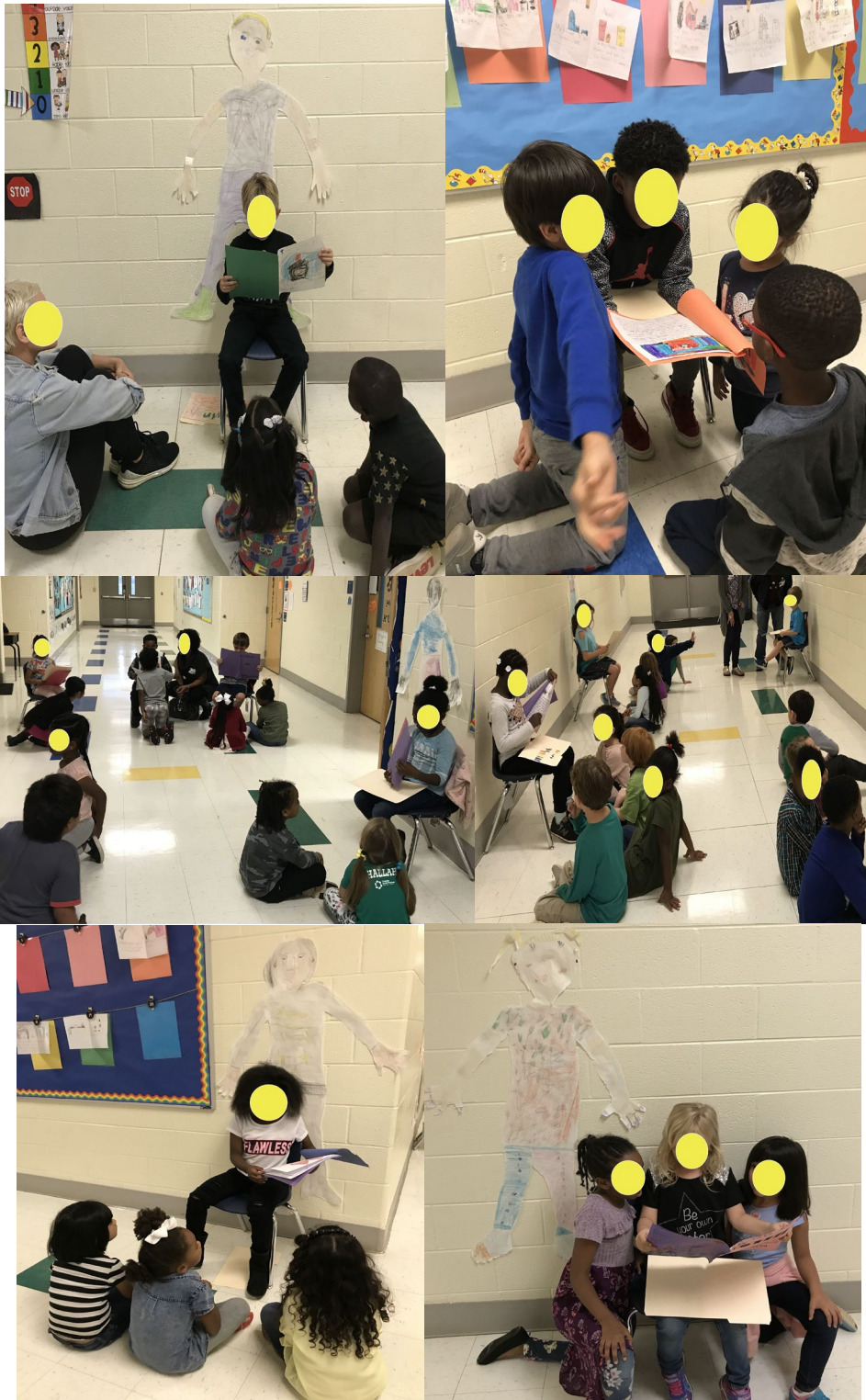


Publishing Lessons - The first step in publishing in this unit is creating a cover for their memoir complete with a title, illustration, and designating themselves as the author and illustrator. We explore the mentor texts one last time and talk about how the author's may have come up with these titles. Students then choose a title for their memoir and create their front cover. Students then create a life size version of themselves by being traced on a large sheet of butcher paper and decorate the the body to look like them. This will be the vessel to hold their memoir for our "Memoir Memory Walk" celebration. Students also create a technology piece by creating a graphic novel version of the heart of the memoir using a program called Canva. These will be on display in the classroom during the "Memoir Memory Walk" to show an alternative representation of their memoir.

Assessments

Students are being assessed formally and informally throughout the unit. One of the informal assessments is the use of their daybook. During the unit students are encouraged to use their daybook as a time capsule to keep all their writing and various materials distributed to assist in writing their memoir. Another informal assessment is the creation of their graphic novel. Students are exposed to Canva and encouraged to create a graphic novel matches their chosen memoir. This is an informal assessment because students were not directly exposed to memoirs in graphic novel form. Our final informal assessment is the "Memoir Memory Walk." During this interactive presentation teachers should be looking for how students are presenting their memoir to the audience as well as elaborating on why this specific memory was chosen, which is a reflection piece we spent a lot of time discussing for the duration of the unit.

Memoir Memory Walk



For the formal assessment I have created a detailed scoring rubric shown below. Each piece of the rubric being assessed has been explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced as needed during conferring and strategy groups. Students can receive a 1 - developing, 2 - progressing, 3 - mastery, or 4 - exemplary mastery for each piece of the rubric. The teacher can then total the points and determine a child's overall score. This rubric also correlates with the CMS K-2 report card.

Memoirs Grade 1 Quarter 1 Unit 1			
Overall Rubric Scoring:			
1	2	3	4
Less than 12 points	13-15 points	16-18 points	19 or more points

Detailed Rubric:				
	1 (Developing)	2 (Progressing)	3 (Mastery)	4 (Exemplary-Mastery)
Overall	Tells a memory with pictures and some "writing".	Talks, draws, and writes about a memory.	Writes about a familiar memory.	Writes about a memory with lots of details.
Lead	Starts the piece by drawing or saying something.	Starts the piece with a page showing what happened first.	Starts the piece with a beginning.	Starts the piece with an hook - setting, sound word, or dialogue.
Ending	Ends the piece after talking, drawing, and attempting to write as much as possible.	Ends the piece with a page showing what happened last.	Ends the piece with an ending.	Ends the piece with a reflection/feeling.
Organization	Organizes the piece with a place for the drawing and an place for trying to write words.	Organizes the piece in order that it happened.	Organizes the piece in the order it happened with a beginning, a middle, and an end.	Organizes the piece in the order it happened with a hook/beginning, a detailed middle, and an end containing reflection.
Elaboration	Adds drawing and attempted writings to the page.	Tells some details like who was there, where/when memory took place, what happened.	Shows who was there, where/when memory took place, and what happened.	Shows who was there, where/when memory took place, and what happened, and how the characters felt in pictures and words.
Craft	Talks and draws some details about the memory.	Draws and writes using five senses or words to show feelings.	Uses the five senses and feeling words to show what they remember	Uses the five senses and shows (not tells) feelings to help readers visualize the story.

The student checklist corresponds with the teacher rubric. It is composed of pictures and words and briefly summarizes mastery in each section. In this unit students are exposed to this checklist during the revision and editing stages. Students then have time to make changes before writing their final draft. The students are taught how to use this over a course of two days during whole group instruction where the teacher models with his or her writing piece, and it is used when students work in partners where they can provide feedback to one another. The checklist also uses a 1, 2, 3 grading scale consistent with the teacher rubric. Teachers are encouraged to expose students to ways they can achieve a 4 using ideas from the teacher rubric. A language conventions portion was incorporated and aligns with an editing checklist students are exposed to and have had practice with.







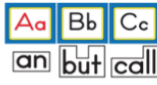
Grade: 1

Student Checklist

Quarter 1 Unit 1

Task Title: Memoir

Task Description: I created a memoir about a memory I reflected on. (W.1.3)

	Grade 1	1	2	3
	Structure			
Overall	I wrote about a memory. 			
Lead	I wrote a beginning. 			
Ending	I wrote an ending to my story. 			
Organization	I organized my writing in the order it occurred and included a beginning, middle, and end. 			
	Development			
Elaboration	I showed who was there, where and when my memory took place, and what happened. 			
Craft	I used my five senses and feelings words. 			
	Language Conventions			
Spelling	I used the word wall to spell sight words correctly. 			

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

W.1.3 - Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal transition words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure. a. With guidance and support from adults, organize information and ideas around a topic to plan and prepare to write. b. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

This standard is the main focus of the unit. The main difference between a memoir and personal narrative being a memoir contains the reflection piece, which is tied in through the feelings aspect.

W.1.4 - With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools and resources to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

This standard is incorporated through the creation of the graphic novel representation using the program, Canva.

W.1.6 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

This standard is taught throughout the unit during conferring. It is also taught indirectly during the revising stage when students are taught how to use the graphic organizers to assist in recalling details.

SL.1.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions. b. Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges. c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

This standard is taught and practiced throughout the entire unit. Students practice this standard daily through turn and talk, partner sharing, and conferring. It is also taught and practiced during Author's Chair and peer revising and editing.

L.1.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; demonstrate proficiency within the K-1 grammar continuum.

This standard is used as students practice writing in past tense as well as practicing some grade level appropriate conventions, which can be seen on the editing checklist and student checklist.

RL.1.2 - Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

RL.1.3 - Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

These reading standards are related to many aspects of the memoir writing process. Just like students practice retelling a story they have heard including key details, students are retelling a

memory. They are encouraged to include details and can use the question words who (characters), when/where (setting), what, why, and how for prompting like they have practiced in reading.

Materials for Classroom Use

- Daybooks - 1 per student and teacher
- Supplies for decorating daybooks
- Sticky notes
- Word wall
- Feelings poster or word bank
- Butcher paper
- Art supplies

Resources for Students

- Daybooks – Daybooks will be used in place of writing folders to hold students thoughts and feelings across the day, including resources utilized throughout the unit.
- Graphic organizers – The purpose of the two graphic organizers used in this unit (shown above in lessons section) are for students to elaborate on their memory and dig deeper to find details they may have forgotten.
- Student checklist – The checklist (located in the assessments section) can be used for a self assessment and peer assessment tool. It assists students in finding ways they can change or enhance their memoir.
- Memoir mentor texts – see below
- Editing checklist – The editing checklist was created based on first grade conventions. After some guided practice it is helpful for students to have the checklist out as they write.

Resources for Teachers

- Research books and articles referred to throughout unit (All books and articles are cited below in the bibliography section.)
- Revised Common Core State Standards – The unit aligns with the standards in the Appendix 1 section.
- Daybook – referenced above
- Memoir mentor texts for read aloud (All mentor texts are referred to in the “Lessons” section of the unit.)
 - Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.
 - This picture book is used to introduce the concept of memoir. The purpose is for children to understand the importance of holding onto meaningful memories.
 - Rylant, Cynthia, and Stephen Gammell. *The Relatives Came*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books, 2001.
 - This picture book is used to introduce the feeling of happiness, joy, and excitement. It is relatable and timely with students just coming back from summer break and having spent time their families.

- Johnson, Angela, and David Soman. *The Leaving Morning*. New York: Scholastic, 2013.
 - This picture book is used to introduce the feeling of sadness, worry, and fear of change or the unknown. It is the perfect picture book to evoke feelings in a safe way that students may not typically be willing to share.
- Pérez, Amada Irma., and Maya Christina Gonzalez. *My Very Own Room*. San Francisco: Childrens Book Press, 2000.
 - This picture book is used to introduce the feeling of frustration as well as a sense pride. Young children often confuse or intertwine happiness with pride so examples from this book are important when distinguishing between the two.

Examples of the following materials can be referenced in the “Lessons” section of the unit.

- Anchor charts – All anchor charts (located in the lessons section) were created by me. Anchor charts should not be completed entirely before a lesson. The “Explode a Moment” anchor chart should depict what you have taught the students so far or are about to teach that day. It is also beneficial to fill in the “Show Not Tell” anchor chart with students using their ideas.
- Graphic Organizers – referenced above
- Editing checklist – referenced above
- Student checklist – reference above
- Grading Rubric – The grading rubric was adapted from the 2018-2019 Elementary Literacy Instructional Guides. It has been modified to align with the unit and the overall concept of memoir as opposed to personal narratives.

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