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Animals and Biographies: Integrated Units for Third/Fourth Looped Classes

Kimberly Lynn Bonsen
Central Washington University

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ANIMALS AND BIOGRAPHIES:

INTEGRATED UNITS FOR THIRD/FOURTH LOOPED CLASSES

A project report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education Reading Specialist

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by

Kimberly Lynn Bonsen

Fall 2005

ABSTRACT

ANIMALS AND BIOGRAPHIES:

INTEGRATED UNITS FOR THIRD/FOURTH LOOPED CLASSES

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This handbook was designed for teachers in a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom. The lessons integrate reading and writing, and the second year (fourth grade) builds upon skills and strategies introduced in the first year (third grade). The third grade set of lessons focuses study on animals while the fourth grade set of lessons focuses on biographies. The handbook contains a GLE/Lesson plan matrix, information for teachers before beginning both sets of lessons, twelve third grade lessons, thirteen fourth grade lessons, and extension activities for both animals and biographies. The final section in the handbook is an appendix that contains every worksheet needed to complete the lessons. Current literature and research regarding child development, various organizational structures in classrooms, looping, learning to read versus reading to learn, and the importance of nonfiction in the elementary classroom were reviewed.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

Researching and developing best practices remains one of the primary goals of educators. Many different learning strategies, instructional strategies, student grouping arrangements, and physical classroom arrangements are used. Even different methods of classroom organizational structure are attempted. There are multiage classrooms, single age classrooms, combination classrooms, non-graded or un-graded classrooms, and looping classrooms. All of these methods have their advantages and disadvantages, but which is truly the best for children?

Before a discussion of classroom organizational structures can occur, different considerations have to be made. The needs of the student, teacher, school, school district, and parents all must be considered. The school district strives to keep overall student enrollment balanced for each school. The school works to maintain overall student enrollment and keep it balanced at each grade level. The teacher evaluates student diversity (ability, gender, behavior, and ethnicity) to provide a balanced classroom. The student and parents want to keep the child's educational experience balanced. Each has different needs, and there are different ways to group students to try to meet everyone's needs. In order to try to meet the needs of all involved, schools are trying looping, a process in which the teacher stays with the same class for two years or more (Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996). However, this organizational structure and its proposed benefits have not been thoroughly evaluated.

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Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a handbook for teachers working in a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom that takes advantage of the benefits of looping. This handbook contains lessons for third grade that introduce reading and writing skills and strategies, and then revisits those skills and strategies, and enhances them, in the fourth grade. This project focuses on a reading and writing exploration of real life in the genre of nonfiction, utilizing animal books and biographies.

Significance

Most teachers would agree that they want what is best for their students. According to its proponents, looping is thought to be an effective classroom organizational structure for many students (Little, 2001). However, there is little or no curriculum support available for teachers to use for the two-year span. In this author's experience, most required curricula are labeled for a specific grade level and supplemental curricula are labeled for a span of more than just two years (e.g. for grades 2-5). Nothing is labeled "For a 3–4 Grade Looping Classroom." Therefore, if a teacher wants to teach thematic units designed to span two years and build on skills taught during those two years, that teacher must develop the activities herself – as this author has done in this project.

This project is specifically designed for a two-year grade continuum, beginning in third grade and continuing into fourth grade. It contains interesting, developmentally appropriate, and instructionally sound teaching and learning activities and methods to

meet the needs and desires of both teachers and students and to meet the Washington

State Grade Level Expectations.

Limitations

Limitations of this project begin with the chosen grade level. It will only be

developmentally appropriate for students in a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom. It

is not recommended that this project be used in any other looping situation without

substantial modifications. This project is also limited in that it does not cater specifically

to the needs of English Language Learners (ELL students) or children with special needs,

though slight modifications and accommodations can easily be made to include these

students successfully. Finally, though this project has been used twice with two different

looping classes, it has not been evaluated or assessed formally. Any evaluation or

assessment has been informal, and done only by the author.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this project, the following terms have been defined:

Combination Classroom

An organizational structure in which one teacher instructs students from two

contiguous grade levels for the full day in the same classroom, usually resulting from

uneven student enrollment distribution (Mason & Burns, 1995).

Developmental Education

A strategy of teaching based on each student's current stage of development. This

approach recognizes that young children pass through a series of developmental stages as

they mature (Grant, 1991).

Information Book

A nonfiction book containing facts and concepts about a subject or subjects

(Harris & Hodges, 1995). Also called informational text and used interchangeably with

nonfiction/nonfiction text.

Looping Classroom

A classroom in which the teacher stays with the same class for two years or more

(Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996).

Multiage Classroom

A classroom in which students have been deliberately placed because of their

varying ages, abilities, and maturity (Milburn, 1981).

Nonfiction

Prose designed primarily to explain, argue, or describe rather than to entertain;

specifically, a type of prose other than fiction but including biography and autobiography

(Harris & Hodges, 1995). Used interchangeably with informational text.

Non-graded/Un-graded Classroom

Classroom in which students, ages 5-8, progress continuously at their own pace and

learn at their own developmental level; there are no set grade levels (Privett, 1996).

Single Age Classroom

Classroom in which students are working above, at, or below a single grade level

(Kuball, 1999).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In order to create a handbook of reading and writing activities to be used in a

third-to-fourth grade looping classroom, much professional literature was reviewed. This

review of literature begins with a discussion of children's developmental needs and their

effects on learning. A review of the history of classroom organizational structures

follows, including Waldorf Schools, multiage classrooms, one-teacher/rural schools,

single age classrooms, combination classrooms, and non-graded or un-graded classrooms.

Then, looping is discussed, including advantages and disadvantages. Various curricula for

looping and other similar organizational structures are presented. Finally, a discussion of

the transition from learning-to-read to reading-to-learn and the importance of reading

nonfiction text in the elementary classroom follows.

This review demonstrates how looping classrooms are based on a long tradition of

teaching styles that provide a sense of belonging and stability for a child. Because of the

two-year commitment involved in a looping classroom, teachers have the opportunity to

extend instruction – begin teaching and learning skills in the first year, and then build

upon those skills and refer back to those skills in the second year. This review will also

provide support for the need for nonfiction reading in the elementary classroom,

especially at the third and fourth grade levels.

Child Development

The discussion of developmental education, emotional stability, and belonging are included to provide a brief insight into child development. These factors are all important in the discussion of looping, because looping classrooms can provide a continuous, stable community in which students can learn.

Developmental Education

The founding father of developmental education, Arnold Gesell, recognized that "specific stages of development were associated with children's ages…However, Dr. Gesell and his colleagues also found wide variations in the chronological ages at which children passed through these stages" (Grant, 1991, p. 10). He believed that students progress through the same developmental stages as they mature, but the rate at which this occurs is often different for each child. For this reason, teaching methods and materials that are appropriate for one child may be very inappropriate for another, even if they are the same age and gender (Grant, 1991). Developmental education allows students to learn and progress at their own pace rather than at a rate the curriculum, the teacher, or the other children dictate. Un-graded, multiage, combination, and looping classrooms help foster this type of learning. Taught properly, these types of classrooms can allow students to progress at their own pace. They can "progress through developmental stages at their own rate without feeling frustrated or (without) being left behind" (Kuball, 1999). In these types of classrooms, students will often spend more than one year with the teacher, as is also found in a looping classroom.

Need for Stability

The kind of learning environment created in a developmentally appropriate classroom, like an un-graded, multiage, or combination classroom, is ideal for children. When students spend more than one year with the same teacher, positive things begin to happen. A stable environment for students is created, because a bond is formed between both teacher and students and students to other students, through the simple fact that they have spent over a year teaching and learning together. This is increasingly important for students of today, as stability at home is often lacking, as reported by Marilyn Bellis, in her article *Look Before You Loop (1999)*. She cites James R. Wetzel, director of the Center for Demographic Studies at the United States Bureau of the Census, as reporting that fewer people today live in "traditional" two parent homes once very common earlier in this century. To help alleviate this problem, teachers have begun spending more than one year with the same children, which gives them "familiar and welcome 'significant others' in their lives, giving them a greater sense of security" (Vann, 1997, p. 52). The continuity, familiarity, and stability of their surroundings allows for greater learning experiences (Little, 2001). Continued time together "increases teachers' and students' understanding of expectations, learning styles, academic strengths, and needs. These ongoing interactions allow teachers to recognize and provide conditions that maximize each student's achievement" (Kaplan & Owings, 2000, p. 24). The final, underlying belief for the need for stability is that "schools can be more successful academically if the children are more secure emotionally" (Bellis, 1999, p. 70).

Need for Belonging

Everyone wants to feel they belong and are accepted by the group. Osterman

(2000) found in her review of research entitled *Students' Need for Belonging in the*

School Community that "students who experience acceptance are more highly motivated

and engaged in learning and more committed to school" (p. 366). These feelings of

acceptance allow the student to focus on schoolwork, rather than whether or not they are

socially adequate according to their peers. As children develop and move through the

educational process, the need for belonging increases; therefore, creating a stable, safe

environment becomes an even more important link to a child's success in school.

When students feel as if they belong, a sense of community is created. This

feeling of community is related to student achievement because it enhances academic and

social development (Royal & Rossi, 1997). Students experience much greater success in

schools structured to create close, sustained relationships among students and teachers

(Darling-Hammond, 1998). Student achievement and attitudes are improved by providing

experiences where students feel they belong and are part of a community. Communities in

which students feel valued and cared for are beneficial to learning (Chapman, 1999).

History of Related Instructional Designs

Many different instructional designs are presented in the upcoming pages. They

are relevant in that they help to show how looping, though considered a 'new' idea in

education, is really a slight variation on many different instructional designs used in

American schools throughout recent history. A brief background of each instructional

design is given first, and then their relationship to and influence on the development of looping classrooms is discussed.

Waldorf Schools

The first Waldorf School began in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany. Emil Molt, owner of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory, asked Rudolf Steiner to found a school for his workers' children (Foster, 1984). The basic philosophy of Waldorf Schools is "man is a threefold being of spirit, soul, and body whose capacities unfold in three developmental stages on the path to adulthood: early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence" (Barnes, 1991). These schools were private, nonsectarian, and provided the children with an arts-based curriculum. All students from the 1st through the 12th grades were permitted to attend. Students learned reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography through artistic activities like drawing, painting, clay modeling, drama, and poetry (Uhrmacher, 1993). All students learn how to paint, sculpt, dance, act, sing, knit, sew, work with wood, and play two instruments. There are no textbooks used, except as a resource, and students create a portfolio of their learning beginning in first grade (Prescott, 1999). According to Prescott (1999) the teachers in Waldorf Schools receive two years of training, in addition to the regular teaching certification requirements, in order to be able to teach in a Waldorf School and effectively educate students using this philosophy.

The schools encouraged the use of colored paint on the walls, ranging from red to pale blue, and natural materials, like wood or cotton, instead of man-made materials like nylon. The rooms lacked the typical rectangular design, arranging desks in arcs rather

than rows. These slight changes were thought to give the rooms an aesthetic quality

(Foster, 1984; Uhrmacher, 1993).

There are many Waldorf Schools still in operation around the world. Barnes

(1991) stated the existence of "more than 500 Waldorf Schools in 32 countries" (p. 52)

and Easton (1997) cited "125 schools are affiliated with the AWSNA (Association of

Waldorf Schools of North America)" (¶5). The Northeast and Islands Regional

Educational Laboratory at Brown University stated that students in Waldorf schools still

remain with their teachers from the first to the fourth grade (1997). The Waldorf Schools

are a link to the modern day idea of looping. Teachers would often stay with their

students from 1st through 8th grade in order to "enhance the stability of the curriculum"

(Uhrmacher, p. 88). This is also believed to "provide continuity and intimacy with one

teacher throughout elementary school" (Easton, ¶14).

Multiage Classrooms

Multiage classrooms have been used by teachers and studied by researchers for

years. A multiage classroom is created when "two or more grade levels…have been

intentionally blended together to improve learning" (Miller, 1996, p. 12). In order to

create an effective multiage program, six key factors need to be present according to

Miller. First, time needs to be spent reviewing professional literature before

implementation planning begins. Second, all involved need to realize there is no single

model or recipe. Third, change must come from many different directions at the same

time. Fourth, multiage programs require conceptual change, and this can be dramatic for

some. Fifth, this change needs to be an evolving, long-term process. Finally, small, yet strategic, steps will lead to success rather than huge leaps.

Multiage classrooms were studied in 2000 by three researchers in a quasi-experimental, *ex post facto* design (students were not randomly assigned to instructional settings). The seven objectives include comparing factors such as 1) gender; 2) Title I/Non-Title I students; 3) ethnicity; 4) interaction between multiage/single-age and gender; 5) interaction between multiage/single-age and Title I/Non-Title I; and 6) interaction between multiage/single-age and Hispanic/Non-Hispanic. The seventh objective is the one that is most pertinent to this project. It explored whether student achievement was affected by being in a multiage classroom rather than a single age classroom. They found that in reading, writing, and math, "multiage students scored higher on the state's integrated performance assessment" (Ong, Allison, & Haladyna, 2000, p. 210), though the results were only considered substantial for math and less substantial for reading and writing. Multiage students did fare better than students in the single-age setting, but to varying degrees (p. 213).

Another study researched the best methods of teaching in multiage classrooms. Chapman (1995) observed a multiage classroom for two years as a participant-observer. She wanted to discover the what, how, and why of children's literacy learning experiences. She found that in the end, the best methods of teaching multiage classrooms were really just the best methods of teaching. Teachers should use different sized groups, of different compositions, for different reasons. Teachers should group, disband, and then regroup students. Chapman encouraged teachers to give students experiences working

both in their "developmental levels and in their learning zones" (p. 425). She concluded her study by saying, "The methods described here – flexible grouping, collaboration, open-ended activities, choice, a variety of representations, shared experiences/individual responses—are not unique to multiage classrooms" (p. 425). These are just good practices all teachers should use in their classrooms.

Multiage classrooms were further discussed in an article entitled *Multiage Magic* written by Elizabeth Monce Lolli in 1998. As principal, she observed the changes that occurred at her school. She "watched multiage classrooms transform education. Magic existed between the walls of (her) school-magic that came from independence, responsibility, responsive instruction, and learning together as a family" (p. 10). Monce Lolli observed both social and academic benefits for students from multiage classrooms. In her opinion, students became more comfortable in their classrooms, because there were expectations of respect for everyone; students were engaged in learning due to challenging versus intimidating curriculum; and a sense of community and family developed as a result of "cooperative learning, developmentally appropriate practices, a sense of respect for others, and knowing that everyone could be successful" (p. 10). Monce Lolli identified the three most important parts of multiage classrooms as:

> 1) content is integrated into broad-based units of study that can be topical,
>
> thematic, or conceptual; 2) learning is conceived as a constructivist process; and
>
> 3) as students construct meaning in an integrated unit, language arts skills and
>
> strategies are treated as tools they use in order to learn content. (p. 10)

She believes that these practices can be present in any effective classroom, however the multiage setting allows students to become "independent learners who can develop to their maximum potential" (p. 16).

Another study helps to show the relationship between multiage classrooms and looping classrooms. Forsten, Grant, and Richardson, in *Multiage and Looping: Borrowing from the Past*, identify many of the similarities of the two instructional designs. One similarity notes how the increased interest in multiage and looping classrooms is "in direct response the diverse needs of today's children. Educators want an environment where they can develop meaningful relationships with students, understand how they learn, and determine how to best provide instruction" (p. 15). Looping and multiage classrooms provide this kind of environment. The authors, Forsten, et al. also address the fact that both looping and multiage classrooms provide continuous learning for the students. At the start of the second year together, teachers can begin teaching on day one to continue the previous year's work, rather than beginning with a substantial review to see where each student's level of learning is. She already knows where that is, since she taught each of the students the year before. Finally, both multiage and looping classrooms are considered to be "instructional designs, not programs. Each of these allows for a different delivery system to meet the diverse needs of students, parents, and teachers" (p. 16).

One-Teacher/Rural Schools

One-teacher schools, or more otherwise known as one-room schoolhouses, are not as common as they once were. In the early 1900s, there were more than 200,000 one-

teacher schools that educated children up to the eighth grade (Schoettger, 2003; Muse, Hite, Randall, & Jensen, 1998). According to Schoettger, many of these schools closed down or consolidated due to the industrial boom of the early twentieth century, and closer to present day, budget issues concerning paying one teacher to teach a small number of children. Most one-teacher schools still operating can be found west of the Mississippi River with Nebraska leading the states with the "highest number of one-teacher schools: 83" (Schoettger, p. 29). Muse et al. (1998) state that approximately 380 one-teacher schools are still running.

Despite how times have changed, one-teacher schools still exist for the same reasons they did in the early 1900s, because children need to be educated. In Norden, Nebraska, Norden Public School educates its 5 students, Glen Martin Elementary in Angelus Oaks, California educates its 18 students (Schoettger, 2003), and in the most extreme case found by this author, Harvey School, in Harvey, North Dakota, educates its one student (Toner, 2004). Unfortunately, due to the aforementioned budget issues, 2004 was the last year Harvey School and Norden Public School operated.

Ironically, one-teacher schools have been receiving publicity lately as school reformers look for ways to improve student learning. They look at the fact that teachers in one-teacher schools "know their students and tailor the curriculum to fit their needs" (Toner, p. 49). They also consider "cooperative learning and small teacher-pupil ratios for nurturing students with good grades and attendance, as well as fewer behavioral problems" (Schoettger, p. 24). Muse et al. (1998) surveyed teachers who taught in one-teacher schools. The strengths are "individualized instruction, peer tutoring, cooperative

learning, one-on-one instruction, lack of discipline problems, no violence or drug

problems, and motivated students [which] made the one-teacher school unique, valuable,

and strong" (¶17). Despite their strengths, the number of one-teacher schools in the

United States is shrinking every year.

One-teacher schools are a link to looping for the obvious reason that the students

stay with the teacher for more than one year, though looping is usually only a two or three

year endeavor, whereas one-teacher schools can last the entire K-8 education. Another

similarity is that the teacher knows her students' strengths and weaknesses very well. She

can capitalize on the strengths to encourage learning, and she can also focus on the

weaknesses and help to improve or change them. Spending more than one year together

also allows students to know each other very well. This creates a learning community

where students feel safe to share, learn, and help each other.

Single-Age Classrooms

Horace Mann is credited with bringing single-age classroom education to the

United States from Prussia in the 19th Century (Grant, 1991). He is often referred to as the

"father of American public schools" (Houston, 1996, p. 10). In this model, classes consist

of children all of approximately the same age. For example, a standard third grade

classroom would have a majority of children who are eight turning nine years old. An

exception might be a student who has repeated or is repeating a grade.

Mann encouraged this classroom structure while serving as the Secretary for the

Massachusetts State Board of Education from 1837 to 1848 (Gibbon, 2002). In order to

serve knowledgeably in this position, Mann "made himself an expert on reading

techniques and school construction and studied the best ways to teach geography, science, bookkeeping, and hygiene" (Gibbon, 1996, p. 33). He traveled to Europe and observed how highly trained German teachers maintained discipline without corporal punishment and instructed young students in reading. He spent countless hours observing schools in the state of Massachusetts and saw a need for change. He wrote twelve reports demanding change in the American public school system that were eventually distributed all over America and to countries in Europe and South America. The reforms Mann called for included a "high-caliber, tax-supported public school (that could) produce efficient workers, promote health, eliminate poverty, cut crime, and unite a society fragmented by class and ethnicity" (Gibbon, 2002, p. 33). Mann is credited with not only stating that a change in the public school system needed to occur, but also working to create that change. The result is the standard classroom found in most American public schools today, nearly 170 years later.

The idea of looping takes one grade level found in single-age classrooms, and allows the teacher to move up to the next grade level with her students. This permits the teacher to spend more than one year together with her students.

Combination Classrooms

Combination classrooms can be found in nearly any school. They are typically created from uneven enrollment distribution within grade levels. One solution is to combine two grade levels in one classroom. Thus, "teachers instruct students from two adjacent grade levels for the entire day" (Mason & Burns, 1995, p. 36). In combination classrooms, teachers teach two or more different curricula. If the combination classroom

is second and third grade, then the teacher would teach the second grade material to the second grade students and the third grade material to the third grade students. Mason and Burns, in their study entitled *Teachers' View of Combination Classes*, also found that teachers tended to reject combination classrooms, because they had to prepare for two grade levels and give two different presentations. These teachers would have preferred homogeneous classes grouped by ability, independence, and behavior for their combination rooms but noted that classes were rarely grouped in that way.

Some advantages were stated in this study, however, for combination classrooms. The first advantage was the exposure the younger group had to the advanced curriculum taught to the higher-grade students. Another advantage was the re-teaching the upper-grade students received when the lower-grade students were instructed. The last two advantages stated for combination classrooms were peer tutoring and development of social skills. Tutoring occurred when the students worked together in small groups or with partners. Students in the lower grade were seen developing social skills more quickly as a result of working with the children in the upper-grade. Although there were some positive reports from the teachers interviewed in this study, overall these teachers would have preferred to teach in a classroom style other than combination.

There is little connection between combination classrooms and looping classrooms, other than the fact that teachers in both combination classrooms and looping classrooms teach at least two different curriculums. In a combination classroom of second and third grade students, the teacher would teach the second grade material to the second grade students and the third grade material to the third grade students. In a second to third

grade looping classroom, the teacher would teach the second grade material the first year, and then teach the third grade material the second year. In both teaching situations, the teacher would be responsible for teaching two different grade level curriculums.

Non-graded or Un-graded Classrooms

The non-graded or un-graded type of classroom organization became popular in 1959. John Goodlad is credited with its introduction to the American elementary schools. Non-graded or un-graded classrooms have no grade-level distinction. Within each classroom, one would find different ages and abilities. According to Privett (1996), the primary goal of a non-graded or un-graded classroom is to "homogenize groups of children for instruction on the basis not of age but of perceived readiness to acquire knowledge and skills" (p. 9). In order to achieve non-gradedness in a school, according to Anderson (1993), all labels associated with grades have to be removed. New assessments and report cards that show continuous individual progress replace the competitive-comparative system that is currently in place. Any instructional groupings within the classroom are not permanent and include at least two different ages. The teachers are organized into teams within the school in order to maximize interaction and collaboration. Finally, in order to achieve non-gradedness, Anderson believes schools can have grade-normed books and texts to be used only as resources.

Non-graded or un-graded classrooms are related to looping classrooms in that both can potentially offer students the opportunity to move through curriculum at their own pace, rather than a pace set by curriculum, the teacher, or other students. Since looping classrooms offer students more than one year with the same teacher, students are

often given more than one year to achieve skills. In this author's experience, students are sometimes not really ready to go on to fourth grade, based on scores achieved on district-mandated assessments. However, since the classroom is a looping classroom, the teacher can make the choice to take the student on or not. In most cases, when the student is taken on to the next year, he makes up for in the second year what he was lacking in the first.

Looping Classrooms

Looping occurs when a teacher stays with the same class for two years or more (Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996). Jim Grant coined the term looping in his book *The Looping Handbook*, written in 1996 (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 1997). However, just because the term is fairly new does not mean the concept is new. Looping is an old idea revisited. It has similar ideas that are used in Waldorf Schools, which began in 1919 (Foster, 1984), and uses some of the same philosophies as non-graded or un-graded classrooms (Privett, 1996), which began to flourish in the early 1960s and again in the early 1990s.

Advantages

Many advantages for looping can be found when reading professional literature. More ambitious learning goals can be achieved when students and teachers have more continuity and time together because the learning is not fragmented (Mazzuchi & Brooks, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Little & Little, 2001). Students are provided with a continuous relationship with their teacher and classmates. This leads to a feeling of stability, security, and community (Mazzuchi & Brooks, 1992; Bellis, 1999; Chapman, 1999). Since the teacher knows the students quite well after a full year together, virtually

no time is wasted at the beginning of the second year. Learning can begin on the first day,

because the teacher knows the students' learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses

(Bellis, 1999; Chapman 1999). Not only does the teacher know her students better, but

she also knows her students' parents better as well. This encourages parent participation

because they know the expectations, requirements, rules, procedures, and personality of

the teacher (Mazzuchi & Brooks, 1992; Bellis, 1999; Little & Little, 2001). Finally, a

looping classroom allows the teacher to "implement a more coherent instructional plan

appropriate to the child's development" (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational

Laboratory at Brown University, 1997).

Disadvantages

One of the strongest parent concerns about looping is the possibility of an

ineffective teacher for his/her child (Little & Little, 2001; Bellis, 1999; Chapman, 1999).

Another potential disadvantage of looping is that a teacher may have to spend two years

with a child with whom she was unable to bond. This could be draining on the teacher

and disruptive to other children's learning (Little & Little, 2001; Bellis, 1999; Chapman,

1999). Some children will always need a fresh start at the beginning of the year, and some

teachers have grade level preferences. For these and the other reasons mentioned, looping

should always be optional for teachers, students, and parents (Little & Little, 2001; Bellis,

1999; Chapman, 1999).

Curriculum

In reviewing the available research for looping, no continual curriculum was

identified. However, suggestions for this kind of curriculum were found. Mazzuchi and

Brooks (1992) describe how certain themes can be spread out over longer periods of time.

This allows children the opportunity to build "conceptual knowledge and develop

attitudes and behavior for maximum learning" (p. 62). They give the example of how

teachers and students may study "The Family and its Needs" in first grade; then they

might learn about how neighborhoods contribute to the family's needs in second grade.

Most curriculum or thematic units, though, are designed for single age or single grade

classrooms. Some of the supplemental materials available are for a broader range of grade

levels, but none were found for use in a third-to-fourth looping classroom. Therefore,

units appropriate for the looping classroom are left to the dedication and creativity of the

teacher. For this reason, after a discussion of looping, the purpose of this project is to

design a project-based reading and writing handbook, incorporating nonfiction, which

begins in the third grade and continues into the fourth grade.

<center>Learning to Read versus Reading to Learn</center>

In the primary grades, much of the focus is on learning to read, and the content is

usually fiction. In fact, "in US schools, narrative texts dominate early elementary school

curricula" (Caswell & Duke, 1998, p. 108). However, as a child progresses through

school, a shift occurs. Students are exposed to less fiction, or narrative text, and are

required to read more nonfiction, or informational text. Because of this shift, a child

moves from learning to read to reading to learn. The focus of the reading changes from

decoding text to extrapolating information from that text. The child begins to learn and

think about what he is learning (Spor & Schneider, 1999). This new reading requirement

usually occurs as more textbooks are used in classrooms for content such as science and

social studies. Teachers can ease this transition by exposing students at an early age to nonfiction trade books.

The Importance of Nonfiction Text

The inclusion of nonfiction text in the elementary classroom is a crucial element in developing a well-rounded reading student. Caswell and Duke (1998) state that students reading nonfiction become "more interested, purposeful, perseverant, knowledgeable, confident, and active in their reading and writing," (p. 108). In her article *Fostering Full Access to Literacy by Including Information Books*, Christine Pappas (1991) states that teachers have believed "that somehow only stories are meaningful for young children" (p. 450). She argues against this notion stating:

> Exclusive use of stories, thus, may end up being a barrier to full access to literacy.
>
> Children need opportunities to use books from a range of genres so they can
>
> acquire the book language that written language in our culture affords. (p. 461)

Pappas believes that using nonfiction in the elementary classroom is vital to student learning and development of reading skills. Her beliefs are supported repeatedly in other research about nonfiction or informational text used in the elementary classroom.

Palmer and Stewart (2005) developed several models for using nonfiction in the primary grades. They warn, though, that the materials used should have age-appropriate content and readability for young students. They are pleased to see more of these books being written at a lower reading level. Prior to this, they feel, students were directed into fiction "partly because most nonfiction in elementary schools was appropriate for intermediate-grade readers" (p. 426). Now with more books available, they hope teachers

will use nonfiction more in the classroom. The models for using nonfiction that they provide are broken down into three categories. They are teacher-directed instruction, scaffolded student investigation, and independent investigation. They encourage teachers to progress with the lessons in that order so that students are taught how to read and comprehend the informational text. They feel that "if educators want younger students to conduct research with informational text, the students must learn how. They cannot jump to the level of independent research all at once" (p. 426). Throughout their article, they give teachers examples and strategies to use with students to teach them how to read nonfiction effectively.

Duke (2004) states that "incorporating informational text in the curriculum in the early years of school has the potential to increase student motivation, build important comprehension skills, and lay the groundwork for students to grow into confident, purposeful readers" (p. 43). Therefore, teachers can use informational text as another method to help students develop their reading skills.

Yopp and Yopp (2000) also believe in using nonfiction text to help children become better readers. They state that this genre serves many functions for young students that they would not get from a traditional narrative such as "exposure to a variety of text structures and features. . . . and concepts and specialized vocabulary" (p. 412). Nonfiction reading often has traits not found in traditional storybooks. Elements such as page numbers, bold print, italics, titles, headings, photographs, captions, a table of contents, appendices, indices, a glossary, diagrams, maps, vocabulary, graphs, charts, and/or tables often appear in informational text. Explicitly teaching these features is

important so that students master the format, language, and content found in nonfiction text (Palmer & Stewart, 2005; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Kays & Duke, 1998). Kays and Duke feel that "providing elementary students with lots of experience in reading, writing, and listening to information text will pay off in big dividends when students have to deal with these kinds of texts in later schooling" (p. 52).

Guillaume (1998) further encourages elementary teachers' use of nonfiction. She believes that:

Exposure to abundant informational resources provides young students with the valuable opportunity to read for the purpose of learning about their worlds and to answer their questions. Primary-grade teachers can use content area reading experiences to help children learn, to build a foundation for getting meaning from text, to encourage the use of reading as a powerful tool to gain information, and to help children develop and respond to important ideas. (p. 486)

The use of nonfiction text in the early grades benefits students as they will be required to read more and more of this genre as they progress through their schooling. Classes become more content oriented as the student ages, changing from one homeroom teacher in elementary school to several classes in middle school/junior high and on into high school. Johnson and Hansen, in their article *Improving Science Reading Comprehension* (2005), believe content area teachers at all levels need to continue the work elementary teachers begin in helping students understand what they read. They feel that just because a teacher's class is science, history, geography, or math that the teacher still needs to teach her students how to read the materials effectively. Their article

provides before reading, during reading, and post reading strategies for this purpose. They

conclude their article by saying, "When you teach science, you are also teaching students

how to read for a variety of purposes and with a variety of materials-both of which

prepare students to become better readers" (p. 15).

In conclusion, Harvey and Goudvis (2004) say it best when they state "nonfiction

reading is reading to learn. . . . when kids read and understand nonfiction, they build

background for the topic and acquire new knowledge" (p. 118-119). If a teacher's utmost

desire is to have her students learn in the classroom, then nonfiction text must be

included.

The Reading/Writing Connection

Now that the importance of nonfiction in the elementary classroom has been

presented, the connection between reading and writing should be discussed. Reading and

writing are inherently connected, in the belief of this author. Fortunately there is much in

the professional literature to support this belief.

Duke (2004) suggests pairing nonfiction reading with writing activities like a

Venn diagram for text that has a compare/contrast structure or having students prepare

questions for each other to answer after completing reading. She also encourages teachers

to have students read informational text for a purpose. She suggests allowing students to

read, and then publish their own writing in a book, brochure, or letter format. She

believes "young students working to comprehend informational text for such purposes [as

to create a book, brochure, or letter] look noticeably different from those reading it simply

because the teacher assigned it" (p. 43).

Spor and Schneider (1999) also encourage the use of writing with nonfiction reading. They warn, however, that students will not know how to use reading and writing to learn content; the teacher must teach these skills explicitly. To do this, Spor and Schneider encourage the use of activities like journaling, reports, KWL charts, webbing/mapping, and outlining to help students comprehend what they read. Headley and Dunstron (2000) concur. Their study paired quality books with comprehension strategies to help students effectively comprehend what they have read. They suggest using the KWL-plus, the Discussion Web, and the Directed Listening-Thinking Activity (DL-TA). They felt these three activities would "actively engage students in meaning construction…(and) focus on meaning construction within authentic reading tasks where direct instruction of isolated skills would be inappropriate" (p. 260).

Palmer and Stewart (2005) encourage the use of writing to aid comprehension after reading nonfiction text. In their article entitled *Models for Using Nonfiction in the Primary Grades*, they list KWL charts, study guides, summaries, diagrams, and written reports, among several others. They promote these tools so that students can "develop skills to independently access expository text in content area subjects" (p. 429). They believe that when students have a purpose for their reading (e.g. writing a report or labeling a diagram) then students' comprehension levels increase. Another example they give is study guides, which are usually used with older grades. However, according to Palmer and Stewart:

> Study guides are appropriate for primary-grade classrooms when they are used to model how to focus on, record, and organize information. With younger students,

a study guide serves as a tool for teachers to model key processes and for students

to practice those processes as they learn to extract information from nonfiction. (p.

429)

Whichever writing tool teachers use with students as they read nonfiction, it is believed

that the combination of reading and writing will help to increase student comprehension.

Summary

All of the aforementioned research is presented to provide research support for

looping and nonfiction as an instructional vehicle for third and fourth grade. Many

different organizational structures for the classroom are reviewed, though the author does

not claim the list and review to be exhaustive. Despite the expansive list presented,

several other classroom models are present in schools today. The ones chosen and

presented here, however, are those felt to have had a substantial presence in the American

Public School system's history and to have had an influence on looping classrooms.

Because looping presents teachers with the opportunity to instruct the same

students for two years, and the two years focused on in this paper are third and fourth,

three other aspects of research are included. They are the transition from learning to read

to reading to learn, the importance of nonfiction text in the elementary classroom, and the

connection between reading and writing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This project was developed for teachers in a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom to help them incorporate nonfiction text into a reading and writing research project effectively. Because a looping teacher in this position has the advantage of a two-year commitment with her children, many skills and strategies can be introduced in the first year together. These skills and strategies can then be built upon and strengthened with further practice during the second year together in fourth grade.

Procedures

Research to support this project was found in books and academic journals. Key terms used for searches in the Research Periodicals-ProQuest, ERIC, Education Full Text, and Article First databases included: developmental education, stability, Waldorf Schools, multiage classrooms, one-teacher schools, Horace Mann, combination classrooms, non-graded/un-graded classrooms, looping, reading/writing connection, importance of informational text, and importance of nonfiction text. A very helpful strategy was to use the references from articles to find further or related research.

In addition, the Washington State Grade Level Expectations (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2005) were consulted frequently for both the third and fourth grades. Reading and writing strategies in this project were based on state requirements, as well as being supported by research as sound practices.

Much of the research used for this project was qualitative and anecdotal. These first hand accounts and observations gave valuable descriptions of the various classroom organizational structures reviewed. Studies on related organizational structures were also used. Very little quantitative research was found on looping itself, but there was research available for the related structures. Studies on the use of small communities to increase student achievement were also reviewed in this project as part of the child development section. However much of the data, both qualitative and quantitative in nature, was found to support the need for and use of nonfiction text in the elementary classroom.

Developing the Handbook

This project was created based on two ideas. The first idea is that because looping provides the teacher with two or more years with her students, she has the unique ability to introduce skills and strategies in the first year, and then enhance those skills and strategies in the second year. The second idea is that in grades kindergarten-second, students are learning to read, and in grades third and fourth, students make the transition to reading to learn (Spor & Schneider, 1999). The next step was to then find topics that would interest third and fourth grade students. In this author's classroom, students enjoy reading to learn about animals and people. A basic research unit was developed around these interests and was the basis for the creation of the handbook. In the original unit, students read about an animal of their choice in third grade and about a historical person of their choice in fourth. This unit was initially created to fulfill both nonfiction text reading requirements and research writing requirements set in Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs), and

this author's school district. As these requirements were already in place, a natural

progression then was to find a way for the third grade project to introduce skills that

could be used again and strengthened to mastery in fourth grade, thus fulfilling the

learning advantage created by the looping classroom.

Conclusion

As a result of the reviewed literature, the author created a handbook of reading

and writing activities that begin in third grade and continue into fourth grade. This

handbook is specifically designed to be used in a looping classroom of these grades where

a teacher could introduce reading and writing skills in the third grade and then return to

those skills in the fourth grade. The handbook was created because of a specific lack of

material written for a third-to-fourth grade loop.

CHAPTER 4

ANIMALS AND BIOGRAPHIES:

INTEGRATED UNITS FOR THIRD/FOURTH LOOPED CLASSES

This handbook is designed to meet the needs of teachers of looped classes who are searching for reading and writing lessons to use with their students. These lessons take advantage of looping in that they introduce and begin skills and strategies in the first year of looping and then return to those skills and strategies and build upon them in the second year of looping.

The grade levels for this handbook are third and fourth grades. The lessons contained here are designed for students at that level, and they should not be used with students of other ages without significant modifications. All lessons contain some combination of reading and/or writing, and a matrix of the lessons and the coordinating Washington State Grade Level Equivalency (GLE) for each subject is provided. All lessons can also be easily modified for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with special needs. In fact, these lessons have been used several times with students of both categories with much success.

This handbook is divided into two main parts. Part 1 is the Third Grade Animal Report. It begins with students learning vocabulary pertinent to speaking about and understanding animals. Next, students select their animal topic and research book. Then students begin using different writing forms such as a KWL chart and note-taking sheets. The major writing component of this set of lessons is a compare/contrast paper in which students compare information about their animal to that of another student's animal. The

lessons conclude with students presenting posters, drawings, and dioramas they have created using their new knowledge about their animals.

Part 2 of this handbook is the Fourth Grade Biography Reports. This set of lessons closely follows the same pattern set in the third grade lessons. This repetition is deliberate in that the students are able to review skills and strategies they learned in the third grade, and then build upon those skills, and learn new ones, in the fourth grade. This set of lessons begins with students self-selecting a person to research and then finding a book and Internet article(s) to use as research material. Students again use writing forms such as KWL charts and note-taking sheets to organize their learning. The fourth grade lessons differ from those in the third grade in a few ways. First, in fourth grade, there is no vocabulary to learn. Also, the major writing piece in the fourth grade is more of a standard research report, as opposed to the compare/contrast writing done in the third grade lessons. Finally, though both grade levels require class presentations, the final presentation in fourth grade is very different from the presentation in third grade.

Each lesson was carefully written in the hope that teachers, whether they are beginners or veterans, can take the plan and easily follow it. Included in each lesson are the purpose, a list of materials needed, an approximate time frame, the objectives, procedural steps, and assessment. Many lessons also include a "Notes to Teacher" section. This section was developed by the author to provide the teacher with insight and extra information for the lesson.

This handbook, in addition to providing the lessons and a matrix of the lessons and GLEs, also includes the forms needed to complete each lesson. All forms are located in the Appendix and can be easily copied and used in the classroom.

ANIMALS AND BIOGRAPHIES:

INTEGRATED UNITS FOR THIRD/FOURTH LOOPED CLASSES

By

Kimberly Bonsen

Fall 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reading GLEs - Grade 3	Third Grade Lessons Animal Report	L1 - Vocabulary Hunt	L2 - Animal/Book Selection	L3 - Animal Report Folder	L4 - KWL Chart (K,W)	L5 - KWL Chart (L)	L6 - Note-taking	L7 - The Diorama	L8 - Creating the Poster - Part 1	L9 - Creating the Poster - Part 2	L10 - Zoo Invitation	L11 - Individual Presentations	L12 - Compare/Contrast Writing
1.1.4 Apply understanding of phonics.													
1.2.1 Apply reference skills to determine word meaning.		X			X	X	X						
1.2.2 Apply vocabulary strategies in grade-level text.		X				X	X						
1.3.1 Understand and apply new vocabulary.		X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
1.3.2 Understand and apply content/academic vocabulary critical to the meaning of the word.		X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
1.4.2 Apply fluency to enhance comprehension.													
1.4.3 Apply different reading rates to match text.			X			X	X						
2.1.3 Determine importance using theme, main idea, and supporting details in grade-level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.						X	X						
2.1.4 Use prior knowledge/schema.					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.5 Predict and infer from grade-level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.													
2.1.6 Monitor for meaning, create mental images, and generate and answer questions.					X	X	X						
2.1.7 Summarize grade-level literary/narrative text and informational/expository text.						X	X					X	
2.2.1 Understand sequence in informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.													

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Benchmark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2.2.2 Apply knowledge of printed and electronic text features to locate and comprehend text.					X	X	X			X			
2.2.3 Understand story elements.													
2.2.4 Apply understanding of simple text organizational structures.													
2.3.1 Understand and analyze the relationship between and among informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.					X	X	X		X		X		
2.3.2 Apply understanding of systems for organizing information.		X			X								
2.3.3 Understand literary/narrative devices.													
2.4.1 Understand how to draw conclusions and give a response to informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.					X	X	X	X	X		X		
2.4.2 Understand the author's purpose for and style of writing in both informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.													
2.4.3 Understand the difference between fact and opinion.					X	X	X	X	X		X		
2.4.4 Evaluate author's effectiveness for a chosen audience.													
2.4.5 Understand how to generalize from text.					X	X	X	X	X		X		
3.1.1 Understand how to select and use appropriate resources.			X		X	X							
3.2.1 Understand information gained from reading to perform a specific task.			X		X	X	X	X	X		X		
3.2.2 Understand a variety of functional documents.					X	X	X			X			
3.4.1 Understand different perspectives of family, friendship, culture, and traditions found in literature.													
3.4.2 Understand contemporary and traditional literature written in a variety of genres.													

3.4.3 Understand a variety of literature representing different cultures and traditions.														
4.1.1 Apply strategies to monitor reading progress.														
4.1.2 Understand how to set grade-level appropriate reading goals.														
4.2.1 Evaluate authors and books to select favorites.		X												
Writing GLEs - Grade 3														
1.1 Develop concept and design.														X
1.2 Use style appropriate to the audience and purpose.														X
1.3 Apply writing conventions.	X				X	X	X			X	X			X
2.1 Write for different audiences.										X				X
2.2 Write for different purposes.	X				X	X	X			X	X			X
2.3 Write in a variety of forms.	X				X	X	X			X	X			X
2.4 Write for career applications.														
3.1 Prewrite					X	X	X							X
3.2 Draft					X	X	X							X
3.3 Revise														X
3.4 Edit														X
3.5 Publish										X				X
4.1 Assess own strengths and needs for improvement.														X
4.2 Seek and offer feedback.														X

Reading GLEs - Grade 4	Fourth Grade Lessons Biography Report	L1 - Person/Book Selection	L2 - Biography Report Folder	L3 - Internet Research	L4 - KWL Chart (K,W)	L5 - KWL Chart (L)	L6 - Note-taking - Part 1	L7 - Note-taking - Part 2	L8 - Note-taking - Part 3	L9 - Hall of Fame Invitation	L10 - Individual Presentation Modeling/Discussion	L11 - Individual Presentations	L12 - Written Reports	L13 - Autobiography
1.1.4 Apply understanding of phonics.														
1.2.1 Apply reference skills to define, clarify, and refine word meaning.					X	X	X	X	X					
1.2.2 Apply vocabulary strategies in grade-level text.														
1.3.1 Understand and apply new vocabulary.														
1.3.2 Understand and apply content/academic vocabulary critical to the meaning of the text.														
1.4.2 Apply fluency to enhance comprehension.														
1.4.3 Apply different reading rates to match text.		X				X	X	X	X					
2.1.3 Determine importance using theme, main idea, and supporting details in grade-level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.						X	X	X	X					
2.1.4 Use prior knowledge/schema.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.5 Predict and infer from grade-level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.														
2.1.6 Monitor for meaning, create mental images, and generate and answer questions in grade-level literary/narrative text and informational/expository text.					X	X	X	X	X					
2.1.7 Summarize grade-level literary/narrative text and informational/expository text.						X	X	X	X			X	X	

2.2.1 Understand sequence in informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.														
2.2.2 Apply features of printed and electronic text to locate and comprehend text.					X	X	X	X	X	X				
2.2.3 Understand and analyze story elements.														
2.2.4 Apply understanding of text organizational structures.						X	X	X				X		
2.3.1 Understand and analyze the relationship between and among informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.		X		X		X	X	X	X					
2.3.2 Apply understanding of systems for organizing information and analyze appropriate sources.		X		X		X	X	X	X					
2.3.3 Understand literary/narrative devices.														
2.4.1 Apply the skills of drawing conclusions, providing a response, and expressing insights to informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.						X	X	X				X	X	
2.4.2 Analyze the author's purpose for and style of writing in both informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.														
2.4.3 Understand the difference between fact and opinion.		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
2.4.4 Evaluate author's effectiveness for a chosen audience.														
2.4.5 Understand how to generalize from text.					X	X	X	X				X	X	
3.1.1 Understand how to select and use appropriate resources.		X		X										
3.2.1 Understand information gained from reading to perform a specific task.		X		X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
3.2.2 Understand a variety of functional documents.		X		X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
3.4.1 Understand different perspectives of family, friendship, culture, and traditions found in literature.														

3.4.2 Understand contemporary and traditional literature written in a variety of genres.																
3.4.3 Analyze a variety of literature representing different cultures and traditions.																
4.1.1 Apply strategies to monitor reading progress.																
4.1.2 Apply strategies for setting grade-level appropriate reading goals.																
4.2.1 Evaluate authors, books, and genres to select favorites.		X		X												
Writing GLEs - Grade 4																
1.1 Develop concept and design.															X	X
1.2 Use style appropriate to the audience and purpose.															X	X
1.3 Apply writing conventions.					X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
2.1 Write for different audiences.													X		X	X
2.2 Write for different purposes.					X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X
2.3 Write in a variety of forms.					X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X
2.4 Write for career applications.																
3.1 Prewrite					X	X	X	X	X						X	X
3.2 Draft															X	X
3.3 Revise															X	X
3.4 Edit															X	X
3.5 Publish															X	X
4.1 Assess own strengths and needs for improvement.															X	X
4.2 Seek and offer feedback.															X	X

Part 1

The Third Grade Animal Report

Information for the teacher: Preparing for this activity

Before beginning this project, it is recommended you present a model animal report to your class. A narrative of how I have worked this in my own classroom follows. Although you do not have to follow it exactly or use the same animal, I do suggest that you provide similar activities for your students so that they have the appropriate prior knowledge to participate in this project successfully. I have done this third grade animal report four times in my classroom. Though each time has been slightly modified and improved, many of the major sections have remained the same.

I always begin by introducing an animal to the students that many of them know little about. I try to choose an animal that is not likely to be a part of their direct experience, like an elephant or cougar. I chose the elephant one year after visiting the zoo and taking pictures of the animals and their exhibits. I chose the cougar because it is the mascot of the college where I earned my undergraduate degree. Both animals have a special importance to me, and this shows through to the children. When they see I have a link of some kind to a particular animal, it makes learning about it even more exciting.

When I began the elephant unit, I started by taping my zoo photos to the front of one of the cupboards in my classroom. The students came in the next morning and were intrigued as to why we now had elephant pictures up. I told them about my visit to the zoo, how I had become very interested in learning more about the animals I had seen, and then told them I wanted to share my new information with them. They were so excited to

begin. We created a class KWL chart on butcher paper, and I explained each section as I drew it on the paper. We filled it out together, listing what we knew about elephants and what we wanted to know about elephants. I told them that we would fill out the L section when we started learning new facts or answering our questions about elephants.

I previously checked out every elephant book from our school library and our two local public libraries. I kept them in a special basket in the room. Each day after recess I would choose one of the books to read (or one of the students would pick one), and I would share it with the class. I always tried to point out and explain the purpose of the special features found in the nonfiction books, such as page numbers, bold print, italics, titles, headings, photographs, captions, table of contents, appendix, index, glossary, diagrams, maps, vocabulary, graphs, charts, and tables. These features are not always found in storybooks, which are the types of text students this age are most accustomed to reading. We started keeping a list of all these features and titled it "Nonfiction Special Features". The children were excited each day to see what features this new book would have, in addition to learning new information about elephants and completing the L section of our KWL chart.

As you develop your beginning unit to introduce your students to the idea of animal reports, please keep some of these things in mind. It is important to introduce them to the different writing forms (e.g. KWL chart, Venn diagram, and/or study guides) you are going to want them to use in their study of an animal. That is why I suggest using a class KWL with them at first. They will be expected to use it independently later in this unit. I also feel strongly, especially after reading the research, that it is very important to

introduce students to the features of nonfiction text and make sure they understand each feature's purpose. In previous years, when I did not know how important that was, I found that students would skip over the captions because they did not know what they were and did not think it was necessary to pay attention to them. Children not accustomed to nonfiction will also tend to read it like a storybook. One of the great things about a nonfiction book is that it does not have to be read cover to cover. Students can use the table of contents and index to find the specific information they need. Finally, as you plan your own animal unit to present to you class, please refer to lesson 1 in which the students do the vocabulary hunt in the dictionaries. I have found after doing this project several times, that these words are important for the students to understand as they read and learn about their animal independently. Being exposed to these words in the context of my animal project first was much more valuable than just doing the vocabulary hunt. When I talked about an elephant and how it is a warm-blooded animal that has a backbone, gives birth to live offspring, and usually has some hair or fur on its body, it was much easier for the students to understand that was why it was a mammal, rather than just hearing me say – elephants are mammals. Therefore, as you create a timeline for yourself, and as you choose books to read with your class, keep the key vocabulary words in mind so that you can give proper exposure to each word as it relates to you animal.

One final project to do before actually beginning the animal report found in this handbook is the diorama. I created one of my own when I did the cougar report with my students. Not only could they see an example of what a diorama is, but they could also see what my expectations were for this part of the project. As a side note, it also helped

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me to understand the time and effort expected of the family for this project, and I could give proper notice and time. It also helped me to form a rubric for the diorama that was concise and could be used to fairly score dioramas based on whether the student received too much help from an adult, some adult help, or a student clearly received little or no help.

In closing, I hope you find enjoyment and learning potential for your students in this handbook. I always look forward to the springtime in third grade, which is when I usually begin this project. Once they know my intent, they cannot wait for the day when they get to pick their own animal to study. I hope you find your students as excited about learning as mine always are. To me, that is what teaching is all about.

Animal Report Lesson 1

Vocabulary Hunt

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to create a student-made glossary of key vocabulary to use as a reference tool throughout the animal report project. When the teacher refers to an animal as a mammal, and the child questions what a mammal is, he/she will be able to reference this sheet quickly, rather than going to the dictionary and finding the meaning of the word again.

Materials:

- Teacher: a copy of the vocabulary hunt worksheet for each student
- Teacher: one dictionary per student
- Teacher: clipboard with the animal report checklist attached (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: answer key (See Notes to Teacher #2.)

Time:

- Allow approximately one hour for the vocabulary hunt, or more time as needed.

Objective:

- Students will look up key vocabulary words in a dictionary.
- Students will select the appropriate dictionary definition, when multiple definitions are provided for the target word.
- Students will paraphrase long definitions correctly.
- Students will begin to understand and use the glossary as a reference tool, as a supplement to dictionaries.

Procedure:

- Show the students where the student dictionaries are kept in the classroom. Model for students, as a reminder, how to use the guidewords to find words in a dictionary.
- Explain that they will receive a list of important vocabulary words that will become part of their speaking vocabulary as they begin to study their animal. These words will be looked up, and the definitions recorded, so that they will have a reference sheet in their folders to refer to when needed.
- Partner students as you see fit, or if you prefer, have them work independently.
- Allow students time to look up words and write the definitions.
- Circulate as students are working and clarify any definitions as needed. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)
- Collect all of the student's vocabulary hunt worksheets and keep them until lesson 3.

Assessment:

- Students are able to look up words and write definitions. Teachers can either give a check on the checklist or a score out of a possible 16.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the animal report checklist, the vocabulary hunt worksheet, and answer key for the teacher are located in the appendix.
2. The dictionaries used to create the teacher's answer key were *Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Dictionary* and *The American Heritage Children's Dictionary*. If these dictionaries are not available to you, it is recommended that you locate each of the words in your classroom dictionary and note the page numbers before having students do this activity. This way you will be assured that the words are present in your dictionaries in addition to having the page numbers on hand as a reference.

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3. Hopefully, most words have already been introduced to students through your previous animal project. If not, many of these words will be unfamiliar to students and will need much explanation. You may wish to take an extra day here and delve further into the meanings of these words.

Animal Report Lesson 2

Selection of Animal and Book for Report

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is for every child to select an animal to study.

Materials:

- School library with a comprehensive selection of animal books (See Notes to Teacher #1 and #2.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately one hour for all students to select an appropriate book.

Objective:

- Every child has a self-selected animal to learn about, a book at his/her reading level, and only one child has a given animal. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)

Procedure:

- Introduce students to the animal book section.
- Discuss briefly with students what is important to look for in an animal report book (at their reading level, lots of information, table of contents and/or index, glossary, photographs vs. drawings, etc.).
- Allow students time to look through the animal section and use the computer/card catalog to locate specific books. Circulate as needed.
- As students find books, have them take the books to a spot in the library, look through them to decide if the book will be at their reading level, and determine if the book will be able to provide enough information or provides too much information.

- Once the child has determined that the book is appropriate for him/her, write the animal down on your checklist (next to the student's name in the left hand margin) and check off that the child has found his/her book.
- Students can begin reading their books while the teacher helps others finish.

Assessment:

- Every child present is able to find an appropriate book and receives a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to teacher:

1. Be sure to schedule an hour with your librarian when you and your class can be in the library and not disrupt library instruction.
2. Familiarize yourself with the animal section so that you are better able to help children find books about their animals.
3. Each child should have a specific animal. Instead of choosing wolves, have the child choose a type of wolf like the Gray Wolf.

Animal Report Lesson 3
Creation of Animal Report Folder

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to give the students a place to keep all of their animal report information. By allowing students to decorate their folders, it gives them ownership of that folder and responsibility for everything that goes inside of it.

Materials:

- Students: crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers
- Teacher: one folder, with brads, for each student
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 30 minutes for this lesson.

Objective:

- Students will create an animal report folder in which to keep all of their animal report information.

Procedure:

- Pass out folders.
- Inform the students that this is the place where they will keep all of their information and worksheets for their animal report. Those items are their responsibility and should not get shoved into their desks. Rather, all materials should be neatly kept in their folders at all times.
- Instruct students to decorate their folders using crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers.

- Pass out vocabulary hunt worksheets and have students place the papers into one of the pockets in the folder.

Assessment:

- Students can receive a check on the teacher's checklist for decorating their folder.

Animal Report Lesson 4

KWL Chart – Part 1, K & W

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to activate any prior knowledge students may have about the animal they are studying. It will also allow the students to generate their own list of questions to guide their study of their animal. Through this activity, the students will become familiar with their books.

Materials:

- Students: animal report folder
- Teacher: a KWL chart for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 30–45 minutes for students to complete the K and W sections of their KWL chart.

Objectives:

- Students will show they understand the format of a KWL chart and be able to fill it in correctly.
- The K section will show what they already know about their animal or any misconceptions they may have about that animal.
- The W section will list questions stating what they want to know about their animal.

Procedure:

- Review with the students the purpose of both the K and the W sections on their KWL chart. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)

- Demonstrate, as necessary, how to fill in the boxes in each section. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)
- Allow students time to fill in both the K and W sections of the KWL chart.
- When students are finished with both the K and W sections of their KWL chart, they should show it to the teacher and then place it in their animal report folders.

Assessment:
- Students can fill in the K and W sections of the KWL chart appropriately.
- Students then receive a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to Teacher:
1. A copy of the KWL chart can be found in the appendix.
2. Students should already be familiar with the KWL chart from the animal project you previously presented to them. As a class, they have already created one. They may need reminders that the K section is for all that they know about their animal, and that the W section is for all of the things they want to learn about their animal.
3. You may wish to make an overhead transparency of the KWL chart and model how to fill in the boxes before letting students work independently.

Animal Report Lesson 5
KWL Chart – Part 2, L

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students read their animal books and find answers to the questions they have in the W section of their KWL chart. The answers to these questions can be written in the L section. If space remains, students can also list any new information they have learned (that is not a direct answer to one of their questions) in the L section.

Materials:

- Students: KWL chart and animal report folder
- Students: animal book
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 45-60 minutes for students to complete the L section of their KWL charts.

Objective:

- Students will use the table of contents and index in their animal books to locate answers to their questions in the W section of their KWL chart.
- Students will write the answers to their questions in the L section of their KWL chart.
- Student will list any new information learned in the L section of their KWL chart, also.

Procedure:

- Remind students that they wrote questions in the previous lesson in the W section. These are the things they would like to learn about when reading about their animal.
- Review with students the meaning of the L in the KWL chart. (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Review with students how to use the table of contents or index of their book to locate the section in which the answer to their question might be found. Remind them they do not have to read the book cover to cover to find their information.
- Students should remove their KWL chart from their animal report folder and begin using the table of contents and index in their animal books to find the answers to their L section questions.
- When students have completed the L section, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their animal report folders.

Assessment:

- Students can fill in the L section of the KWL chart appropriately.
- Students then receive a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. Students should already be familiar with the KWL chart from the animal project you previously presented to them. As a class, you have already created one. They may need reminders that the L section is for the answers to their W section and any other new information they may have learned. It works out nicely if they write their answers on the line next to where they have written their question. For example, if on line 2 in the W section, a student wrote "What does an elephant eat?" then on line 2 of the L section, the student should then write what an elephant eats. Another suggestion is to have the students write the page number in the margin to the right of the L section where they found the answer to their

questions. This may help them remember and quickly locate where that information was found.

Animal Report Lesson 6

Note-taking

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students use their books to complete the note sheets. This will help them to organize the information they are learning about their animals.

Materials:

- Students: animal report folder
- Teacher: one note-taking sheet for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 2–3 one-hour sessions, depending on the abilities of your students and their level of independence.

Objective:

- Students will use the table of contents and index to complete the note-taking sheet.
- Students will begin to organize the information they are leaning about their animals into topics and sections.

Procedure:

- Distribute note-taking sheets to students. Draw their attention to the first section that includes the title of the book, the author, and the publishing information. Show the class on a model book where to find the appropriate information. Circulate as needed to help students fill out this section of the worksheet.

- Using a transparency of the note-taking sheet, show students how to fill in the information. Then circulate as needed to help students fill out this section of their worksheet.
- Once the title, author, and publishing information have been filled out, go over the remaining sections with the class using the transparency.
- Answer questions and circulate as needed. Remind them to use the table of contents and index in their books to locate the information needed for the description, related animals, habitat, eating habits, and interesting facts about their animal.
- Once the notes pages are completed, you should make a copy of each child's papers. This way each child will have one copy to keep at school, and one copy to take home to use in creating the diorama. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- When students have completed the note-taking sheets, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their animal report folder.

Assessment:

- The level of thoroughness for the note-taking sheet is to be determined by each individual teacher. It can simply be checked off, each section can be given a score, or the overall paper can be given a score. All options can be marked on the checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the note-taking sheet can be found in the appendix.
2. At this point in the project, you may wish to send home the diorama letter and rubric, so that students can begin their two-week homework project of creating their diorama. The diorama letter and rubric can be found in the following lesson.
3. You may want to have a parent volunteer come in on this day as the students tend to have a lot of questions and need a lot of help. One more adult in the room helps to answer all of the questions quickly.

Animal Report Lesson 7

The Diorama

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to explain the expectations of the diorama and present an example of the diorama to the students.

Materials:

- Teacher: a model diorama
- Teacher: one diorama letter and diorama rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: one copy of each student's note sheets for them to take home

Time:

- Allow approximately 30 minutes for this lesson.

Objective:

- Students will know the expectations for the diorama.
- Students will show what they know about their animal, its habitat, and its predators and prey in the diorama.

Procedure:

- Pass out the diorama letter and diorama rubric to each student. Read through the letter together. Go over the rubric requirements.
- Show an example of a diorama. This can be one you have made or a student's diorama from a previous year. Be sure it meets the requirements set forth in the rubric.
- Allow time for the students to ask questions. Be sure the date for the dioramas is clear.

- Another option would be to allow students to score your diorama. In this case, students will need two copies of the rubric. One will be taken home with the diorama letter, and the other is used in class.

Assessment:

- There is no assessment on this actual day. Use the diorama rubric to score each student's diorama after the due date. Allow the students to keep their rubric with their score in their animal report folders. Record the scores on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the diorama letter and rubric can be found in the appendix.

Animal Report Lesson 8

Creating the Poster – Part 1

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students create a drawing of their animal with labels to show special features or adaptations.

Materials:

- Students: pencil, crayons or colored pencils
- Teacher: one copy of the book *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page
- Teacher: one 9x12 piece of white drawing paper or construction paper for each student
- Teacher: one copy of the drawing rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 15-20 minutes to read and discuss the book *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*
- Allow approximately 45 minutes for students to complete their drawings.
- Allow an additional 30 minutes, or more as needed, for students to add labels for special features and descriptions of adaptations.

Objective:

- Students will create a drawing of their animal.
- Students will label their animal's special features.
- Students will give explanations of 3 or more of their animal's special features.

Procedure:

- Read the story *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*
- Have a short discussion with students about the book. Talk about how each animal in the book had something the other animals did not have. Tell them that part was a special feature for that animal.
- Discuss the meaning of special features so that they have a clear understanding of the word. Ask them to share any special features they can think of for their animals. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Tell students they will be drawing a picture of their animals. They will need to include their animal's special features.
- Go over the drawing rubric with students so they know what is expected of them for the drawing. This rubric can be kept in their animal folders.
- You may want to create a drawing of your own to use as an example. Or, you may want to simply draw a sketch a drawing on the overhead. In either case, you should model your expectations for this project for the students, and show them how to label the special features.
- Pass out the white paper. Encourage students to use the entire sheet, not just draw a small picture in one of the corners or in the center. The drawing should fill up the page. They should probably draw their picture in pencil first.
- Once the pencil drawings are completed, students should then use crayons or colored pencils to add color. They should not add anything to the background of the picture, as that space will be needed for the labels.
- On the bottom of the page, students should write their animal's name using large letters and a bright color so that the writing can be seen from across the room.
- The students will then label at least 5 of their animal's special features, in order to receive all points on the attached rubric.
- The students will then choose at least 3 special features to write an explanation for, in order to receive all points on the attached rubric.

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Assessment:

- Use the Drawing Rubric to score each student's drawing. Allow the students to keep their rubric with their score in their animal report folders. Record their score on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the drawing rubric can be found in the appendix.
2. By special features I mean, what makes your animal different from other animals? For example, an elephant has big ears, a trunk, thick skin, little hairs on its skin, and a tail.

This lesson was adapted from ideas in Chapter 9 of *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis. It was also adapted from ideas presented in Palmer and Stewart's article *Models for Using Nonfiction in the Primary Grades*, 2005.

Animal Report Lesson 9

Creating the Poster – Part 2

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to teach students to determine what is important in what they have learned about their animal. Once they have chosen what is important, they will use that information to create a poster about their animal.

Materials:

- Students: pencil, ruler, markers, glue stick
- Teacher: several yard sticks
- Teacher: one large sheet of light colored butcher paper, approximately 3 ft. x 4ft.
- Teacher: one poster rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 2 one-hour sessions, or more as needed.

Objective:

- Students will use the information from their note sheets to create a poster about their animal.

Procedure:

- Go over the poster rubric with the students so that they know what the expectation is for this part of the project.
- You may want to create a poster of your own to use as an example. Or, you may want to simply draw a sketch the poster on the overhead. In either case, you should model your expectations for this project for the students.

- Model for students how to divide their poster into four equal sections (simply fold the butcher paper into fourths). Circulate around the room as needed while students divide their posters.
- Students then carefully center their drawing on the poster and attach with glue stick type glue. Circulate around the room as needed.
- Students should label, with a pencil, each of the four sections of the poster in the following order moving clockwise around the poster: Description, Habitat, Interesting Facts, and Eating Habits. Be sure they are writing large enough that their poster can be read from across the room.
- Students then need to examine their note sheets to find the most important information from each section. They need to mark on their note sheets the information they feel is most important so that it stands out from the other information.
- Using only the most important information from each section of their note sheets, students will create bulleted lists on their posters stating facts for each of the four sections. Again, the writing needs to be large enough to be read from across the room. Students should also use their rulers to create straight lines on which to write their facts. Facts do not have to be written in complete sentences; meaningful phrases can be used.
- Once all the facts have been written in the appropriate section of their poster, students should then be instructed to look over their poster for any writing errors such as spelling or word omissions. Students also can have a buddy look over their work and look over the work of their buddy.
- This is another lesson when parent volunteers can be used. Students tend to need help choosing information to write on their posters, getting it organized on their posters, and checking spelling.

Assessment:

- Use the Poster Rubric to score each student's poster. Allow the students to keep their rubric with their score in their animal report folders. Record their score on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the poster rubric can be found in the appendix.

Zoo Invitation

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to create an invitation to be used to invite parents, other classrooms, and community members to come to the classroom and see the animal report projects. (See Notes to Teacher #1.)

Materials:

- Students: pencil, crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers
- Teacher: an overhead transparency of the invitation (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Teacher: several copies of the invitation for each student
- Teacher: one invitation rubric for each student
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow one 45–60 minute session to create invitations.
- Allow as much time as you feel necessary to host the zoo.

Objective:

- Students will learn the important parts of an invitation.
- Students will be able to fill out an invitation correctly.

Procedure:

- Using the overhead transparency of the invitation, explain each of the sections. Then model how the invitation should be completed.
- Pass out the invitations and allow students time to fill them out. Every student should complete an invitation for family (parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles etc), and another classroom or community member.

- When they are filled out, students can decorate them.
- Send zoo invitations home.
- Host the zoo in the classroom. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)

Assessment:
- Use the Invitation Rubric to score each student's invitations. Allow the students to keep their rubrics with their scores in their animal report folders. Record their score on your animal report checklist.
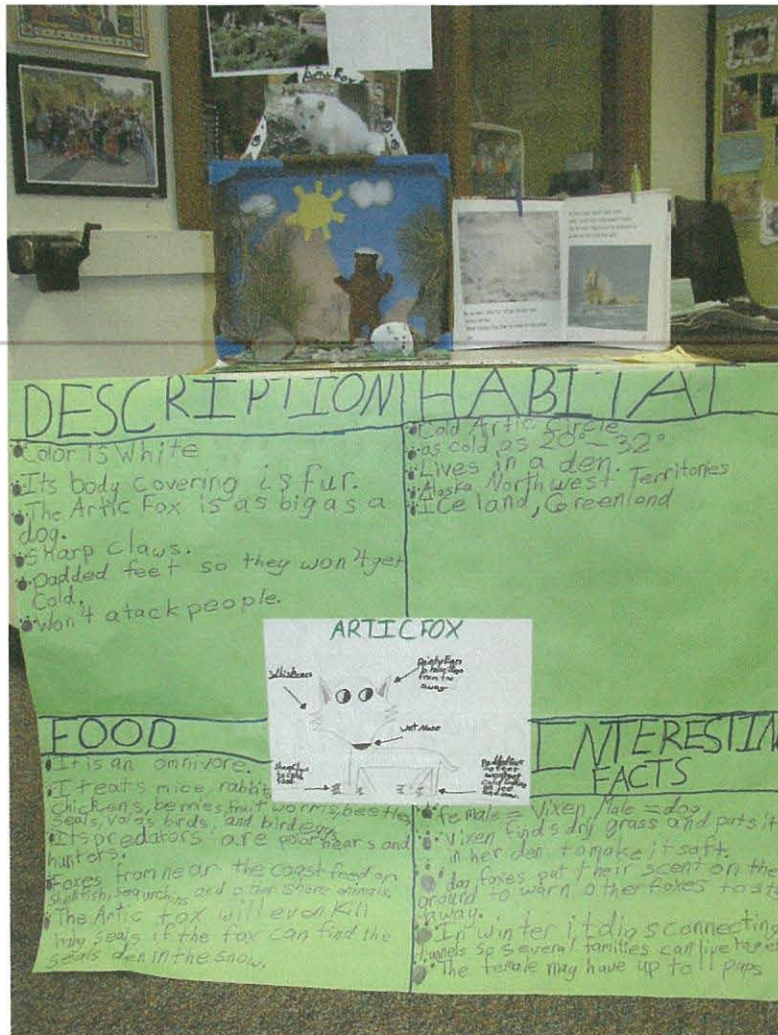
Notes to Teacher:
1. The way I have done this in the past is to present all the projects as exhibits in a zoo. Since my last name is Bonsen, the zoo then becomes The Bonsonian Zoo. Other hints for running the zoo follow.
   - Before you have the zoo, but after invitations have gone home, you might want to make formal contact with parents informing them of the importance of student attendance at the after school and before school zoo times.
   - On or before the day of the zoo, I suggest you make some posters for your door or hallway announcing the zoo. I also hang streamers in the doorway.
   - Inside your classroom, set up students' desks in a circle or U-shape to allow for traffic flow. Be sure to space the desks so that all the information on the posters show. Each student sets up his/her diorama on his/her desk, and hangs his/her poster on the front of the desk.
   - The students become zookeepers. They are the experts for each particular animal. They each wear nametags, with their animal specialty listed below their name. For example, if a student named Jenny did her report on elephants, her nametag would read: Jenny, Elephant Expert.
   - Allow students time to practice what they will say during the zoo. You may want to divide the class in half. One half stays at their exhibits; the other half gets up and wanders through the zoo, asking questions. The ones who stay at
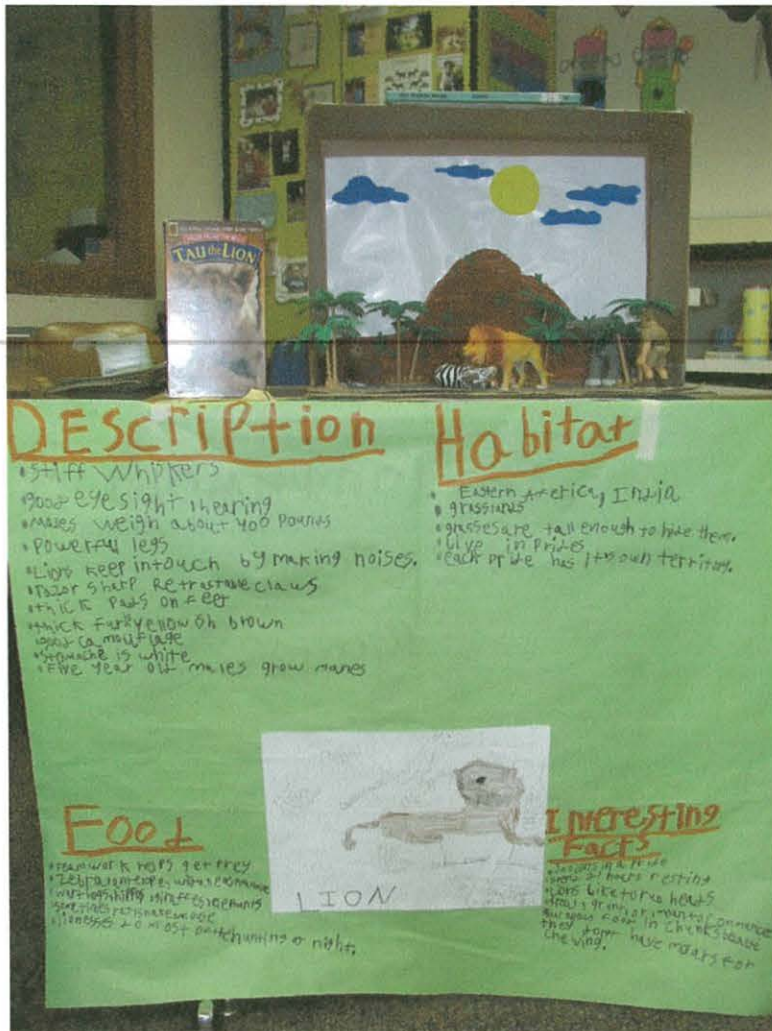
their exhibit practice answering questions. Then, have students switch roles so that each child gets to visit exhibits and practice answering questions.

- I usually invite other classrooms in for the last 45–60 minutes of a day of my choice. I also schedule time for the parents that night, as well as the following morning. Thus, the exhibits are set up once, used three times, and then can be taken down. Examples of times might be: 2:15 PM–3:00 PM on Tuesday for other classrooms and parents, 6:00 PM–7:00 PM on Tuesday for parents and community members, and finally 7:30 AM–8:30 AM on Wednesday for parents and community members. Hopefully, offering these times will make the zoo available for all parents to attend. Also, requesting an RSVP lets you know if anyone is coming during the evening or morning times so you do not show up and no one else does.

2. A copy of the invitation and invitation rubric can be found in the appendix.
3. I have the zoo before the individual presentations so that students have a chance to practice speaking about their animals without being graded before they have to do their presentations to the class for a score.

This photo shows an example of a zoo exhibit. This student decided to have her animal report book as part of her exhibit. She has it clipped open to pages she felt were important. Also, this student included a small poster on the top of her diorama. It contains photographs she took of an artic fox when she and her family went to a local zoo. Because she had seen this animal at that zoo, when the reports began, she knew exactly what animal she wanted to study.

This photo also shows an example of a zoo exhibit. This student decided to have a video in his exhibit. The cover of the video box is hard to see due to the glare from the camera.

This student felt the video was very interesting and actually asked to have part of it shown in class, which we did. This student's father is a taxidermist who has his shop at their home. At this time, he had an African lion in his workshop to mount. Because of this, when the idea for animal reports was presented, this student immediately chose lions because he had just seen one in his dad's shop. During one of the zoo times, the family actually brought the mounted lion in to be part of this student's zoo exhibit.

Unfortunately, this was not captured in this photograph.

Animal Report Lesson 11

Individual Presentations

Purpose:

- The purpose of the individual presentations is to give each student an opportunity to present what he/she has learned about his/her animal to the class. Students have had the opportunity to practice this during the zoo.

Materials:

- Students: diorama, poster, and possibly note cards
- Teacher: one animal report oral presentation rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 15 minutes per student.

Objective:

- Students will present the information they have learned about their animals to the class.
- Students can use their dioramas and posters to explain the animal's description, habitat, eating habits, and interesting facts.

Procedure:

- Assign preparing for the animal presentations for one week's homework. Use the parent letter found in the appendix. Assign each student to a day before sending letter home. This homework usually takes place the same week as the zoo. Attach a copy of the presentation rubric to the letter that goes home so that students can see how they will be scored.

- Discuss with students what the presentation should be like. Remind students that they have already practiced presenting their information during the zoo.

Assessment:

- Use the animal oral presentation rubric to score each student's presentation. Allow the students to keep their rubrics with their scores in their animal report folders. Record their score on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the animal report oral presentation rubric can be found in the appendix.

Animal Report Lesson 12

Compare/Contrast Writing

Purpose:

- The purpose of the compare/contrast writing is to challenge students to find similarities and differences for the animals they are studying and to then present those similarities and differences in writing.

Materials:

- Students: pencil, writing notebook or notebook paper, and animal information (book, folder, and notes)
- Teacher: one Venn diagram for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: one compare/contrast writing rubric for each student
- Teacher: one sheet of blank paper for each student to make a cover
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 30 minutes for students to complete the Venn diagram, or more time as needed.
- Allow several 30 – 45 minute sessions so that students have enough time to take their writing piece through the writing process.

Objective:

- Students will teach each other facts about their animals.
- Students will find similarities and differences between the two animals and record that information in a Venn diagram.
- Students will write a two-paragraph paper that tells the reader the similarities and differences between the two animals.
- Students will correctly cite their references on a references page in their paper.

Procedure:

- Explain all of the following steps with students first. Use a transparency of the Venn diagram to model for students how you want them to complete it. If you feel it is beneficial for you students, write a model compare/contrast paper on the overhead, with their help, so that they are comfortable with the process and understand how to develop their sentences so that the similarities and differences are not just listed in the paragraph. Useful language for this can be found in Notes to Teacher # 2 and #3.

- Tell students they will be partnered randomly, and that the partners' first job is to teach each other about their animal's description, habitat, eating habits, and interesting facts.

- As they are teaching about their animals, if one student hears a similarity or difference, they can stop and record that similarity or difference on the Venn diagram.

- Once each student has taught the other, and the Venn diagram has 4 – 6 items in each section, then the students can begin their compare/contrast writing assignment.

- The compare/contrast paper contains two paragraphs. One paragraph explains all of the similarities, and all of the differences are explained in the other paragraph. Similarities or differences can be written first.

- Once the first draft of the writing is done, students then need to self-edit and self-revise.

- Then students can peer-edit and peer-revise.

- Once the editing and revising are completed, the final draft can be written. Then students can illustrate a cover for their writing.

- The final step is to create the reference page. Using the overhead, model for the students how the copyright information is written. Circulate as needed to help students complete this page.

Assessment:

- Use the Compare/Contrast Writing rubric to score each student's writing. Attach the rubric to the student's writing and three whole punch the papers. These papers are then put into the brads in the student's animal report folder. Record the student's score on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the Venn diagram and the compare/contrast writing rubric can be found in the appendix.

2. Suggestions for similarity language: The _____ (animal 1) and the _____ (animal 2) have many/some things in common. First they both _____. They also_____. The _____ (animal 1) has/does _____, and the _____ (animal 2) has/does too.

   - The cougar and the elephant have some things in common. First, they both have four legs and long tails. They also communicate by making loud noises. The cougar has one to two babies at a time, and the elephant does too.

3. Suggestions for differences language: The _____ (animal 1) and the _____ (animal 2) have many/some differences. First, the _____ (animal 1) has/does _____. The _____ (animal 2) doesn't do that/doesn't have those. Instead _____ the (animal 2) has/does _____. Another difference is that the _____ (animal 1) _____, but the _____ (animal 2) _____.

   - The cougar and the elephant have many differences. First, the elephant has a long trunk. The cougar doesn't have a trunk. Instead, the cougar has a small nose. Another difference is that the cougar is a carnivore, but the elephant is an herbivore.

Extension Activities:

- Animal poems: Create acrostic poems for each animal.

- Animal story problems: Use facts like weight for each animal to create math problems. For example, if the average male cougar weighs 160 pounds, then how much would 6 male cougars weigh? 160 lbs. * 6 = 960 lbs.

- Crossword puzzles or word searches: Use the websites listed to create crossword puzzles or word searches.

  o Crossword Puzzle Games – Create Puzzles

    http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com

  o Free Online Crossword Puzzle Maker

    http://www.puzzle-maker.com

  o Discovery School's Puzzlemaker

    http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com

- Flipbook: The flipbook would be an activity that would take the place of both the drawing lesson and the poster lesson. It is made with three and a half pieces of 9x12 construction paper. One page stays full size. One page gets cut to produce the two-inch section and the ten-inch section. Another gets cut to produce the four-inch section and the eight-inch section. The last piece is six inches long. All sections get stacked, smallest to largest (2", 4", 6", 8", 10", and 12"). The two-inch section gets labeled with the animal's name. The rest of the sections are labeled description, habitat, eating habits/food, and interesting facts. The order of these labels is up to the individual teachers. The last full page is for the drawing.

- Graphing: Use information about different animals such as height, weight, carnivores vs. herbivores, reptiles, birds etc to create graphs.

- Papier Maché: Use papier maché to create models of each animal.

- Pop Up book: Students can make a pop up book to tell facts about their animal, or they can create a story about their animal.

- Q & A book: Using the Q & A form located in the appendix, each student creates a page of three questions and three answers for his/her animal. These questions can

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come from the KWL chart created in lessons 4 and 5, or they can be questions the child feels are important. All students' pages are collected and compiled into a book for the class. Copies can be run so that each child has a copy of the class's animal book.

- Mapping: Using a large map of the world, each student can identify the country or countries, ocean or oceans, where his/her animal lives. Use a map tack to identify these areas, and then tie a string from the map tack to an index card with the animal's name listed or to a picture of the animal that is located around the map.

- Presentations to other classrooms: In addition to doing the presentations found in lesson 11, these same presentations could be done in other classrooms to teach them about different animals. Or, the presentations to other classes could take the place of presentations in your classroom.

- Transparency: The website http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/ has animal printouts that can be printed whether or not you are a member of the site. Give each child a blank transparency and let him/her trace the outline from the printout onto the transparency. This transparency can be used during the oral presentations.

- Written report: A written report can be done using the note sheets. An outline and rubric for a written report can be found in the appendix.

Part 2

The Fourth Grade Biography Report

Information for the teacher: Preparing for this activity

Before beginning the biography report, it is recommended that you share one or more biographies with your class so that they understand that it is the story of a person's life as written by someone else. I usually read at least one book about Helen Keller, someone who I greatly admire. I share with the class how I think of her as an amazing person who achieved amazing things, despite all of her impairments. They become very interested, not only because of her great life, but because they know she is important to me. They are always asking, "Is this real?" or "Was she really a real person?" When I tell them they will get to choose someone whom they like or admire to read about, they can hardly wait to begin.

As we read Helen Keller's biography, I use a bulletin board with large chart paper on it to keep track of important facts from her life. The information is identical to the note sheets the students will be using as they read about their chosen person's life. This helps them to see how to organize information and to categorize information correctly into the different sections. I also use this time to review the features of print found in biographies such as a table of contents, captions, index, and/or timelines.

For the concluding project to this unit, the students will dress up as the person they are studying and present his/her life to the class, speaking as if they are that person. As a model, I choose someone other than Helen Keller and model how to do this. I do not dress up as Helen Keller, because they already know so much about her life, and I want to demonstrate what it will be like for the audience to learn about a new person, and how to field questions from the audience. One year I presented as John Olerud, who was then the first baseman for the Seattle Mariners. This also shows them they do not have to choose someone who is the same gender as themselves.

One thing to keep in mind before beginning this project is to look at the selection of biographies in your school library. If the selection is limited, you may have to go through your local public library to help students choose a person who is significant to

them. I have found students to be much more successful if the person they are going to research is important to them, and not just chosen because there happens to be a book about him/her in the school library.

This project builds upon many of the skills students used in the third grade animal report. Students self-select a topic, choose their own research material, complete study guides, and plan a presentation for the class. One main difference is that students will be writing a biography for their chosen person, as well as writing their own autobiography. After learning about someone who is important to their teacher, I have found that students can hardly wait to begin researching a person who is important in their own lives.

Biography Report – Lesson 1
Selection of Person and Book for Report

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is for every child to select a person to study.

Materials:

- School library with a comprehensive selection of biographies (See Notes to Teacher #1 and #2.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached (See Notes to Teacher #3.)

Time:

- Allow approximately one hour for all students to select an appropriate book.

Objective:

- Every child has a self-selected person to learn about, a book at his/her reading level, and only one child has a given person.

Procedure:

- Introduce students to the biography book section.
- Discuss briefly with students what is important to look for in a biography (at their reading level, lots of information, table of contents and/or index, glossary, photographs vs. drawings, etc.).
- Allow students time to look through the biography section and use the computers/card catalog to locate specific books. Circulate as needed.
- As students find books, have them take the books to a spot in the library, look through them to decide if the book will be at their reading level, and determine if

the book will be able to provide enough information or provides too much information.

- Once the child has determined that the book is appropriate for him/her, write the name down on your checklist (next to the student's name in the left hand margin) and check off that the child has found his/her book.
- Students can begin reading their books while the teacher helps others finish.

Assessment:

- Every child present is able to find an appropriate book and receives a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to teacher:

1. Be sure to schedule an hour with your librarian when you and your class can be in the library and not disrupt library instruction.
2. Familiarize yourself with the biography section so that you are better able to help children find books.
3. A copy of the biography report checklist can be found in the appendix.

Biography Lesson 2

Creation of Biography Report Folder

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to give the students a place to keep all of their biography report information. By allowing students to decorate their folders, it gives them ownership of that folder and responsibility for everything that goes inside of it.

Materials:

- Students: crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers
- Teacher: one folder, with brads, for each student

Time:

- Allow approximately 30 minutes for this lesson.

Objective:

- Students will create a biography report folder in which to keep all of their biography report information.

Procedure:

- Pass out folders.
- Inform the students that this is the place where they will keep all of their information and worksheets for this report. Those items are their responsibility and should not get shoved into their desks. Rather, all materials should be neatly kept in their folders at all times.
- Instruct students to decorate their folders using crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers.

Assessment:

- Students can receive a check on the teacher's checklist for decorating their folder.

Biography Lesson 3

Internet Research

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is for students to use the internet to find an informative article about the person they are studying. They will use this as a second source of information for their reports.

Materials:

- School computer lab with enough computers for the entire class. Each computer should have internet access and a filter to keep students from stumbling upon inappropriate web sites. (See Notes to Teacher #1.)

Time:

- Allow approximately 45-60 minutes, or more time as needed.

Objective:

- Students will search the internet and find an article about the person they are studying.

Procedure:

- Before taking students to the computer lab, have the school computer technician bookmark the websites listed in the Notes to Teacher #2 section, as well as any other relevant websites you may know of, on the computers.
- After the student have logged on to the internet, show them how to access the bookmarked websites. Allow them time to search for the person they are studying.
- Once students have found at least one article, have them print it out and place it into their biography folders. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)

Assessment:

- Students can receive a check on the teacher's checklist for finding their internet article.

Notes to Teacher:

1. This lesson was used in a school with a computer lab and filter already in place. At the beginning of the year, all students sign an internet use agreement as per school policy. Also, all students learn how to access the internet in their computer lab class as third graders. If a school does not have this capability, then this lesson can be skipped, and students can use just the book as a resource, or, teachers can use individual classroom computer(s) and rotate students as time allows.

2. Good websites I have found are listed below.

   a. Great Websites for Kids (from the American Library Association)
      http://www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cf apps/gws/displaysection.cfm&sec=11

   b. Yahooligans Directory (School Bell/Social Studies/History)
      http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/School_Bell/Social_Studies/History/Biogra phies/

   c. Great Sites for Kids (Biography and History Websites)
      http://www.greatsitesforkids.com/gsfk/biography.asp

3. Some of your students may be able to handle using more than one article. I have found that using the book and one internet article is plenty for most students. However, if you have an advanced student, he/she may find more than one article and complete another note-taking sheet for that article as well.

Biography Lesson 4

KWL Chart – Part 1, K & W

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to activate any prior knowledge students may have about the person they are studying. It will also allow the students to generate their own list of questions to guide their study of the person. Through this activity, the students will become familiar with their books.

Materials:

- Students: biography report folder
- Teacher: a KWL chart for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 30–45 minutes for students to complete the K and W sections of their KWL chart.

Objectives:

- Students will show they understand the format of a KWL chart and be able to fill it in correctly.
- The K section will show what they already know about their person or show any misconceptions they may have about this person.
- The W section will list questions stating what they want to know about their person.

Procedure:

- Review with the students the purpose of both the K and the W sections on their KWL chart. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)

- Demonstrate, as necessary, how to fill in the boxes in each section. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)
- Allow students time to fill in both the K and W sections of the KWL chart.
- When students are done with both the K and W sections of their KWL chart, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their biography report folders.

Assessment:
- Students can fill in the K and W sections of the KWL chart appropriately.
- Students then receive a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to Teacher:
1. A copy of the KWL chart can be found in the appendix.
2. Students should already be familiar with the KWL chart from the animal report project done in third grade. They may need reminders that the K section is for all that they know about their person, and that the W section is for all of the things they want to learn about their person.
3. You may wish to make an overhead transparency of the KWL chart and model how to fill in the boxes before letting students work independently.

Biography Lesson 5

KWL Chart – Part 2, L

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students read in their biography books and find answers to the questions they have in the W section of their KWL chart. The answers to these questions can be written in the L section. If space remains, students can also list any new information they have learned (that is not a direct answer to one of their questions) in the L section.

Materials:

- Students: KWL chart and biography report folder
- Students: biography book and internet article(s)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 45-60 minutes for students to complete the L section of their KWL charts.

Objective:

- Students will use the table of contents and index in their biography books to locate answers to their questions in the W section of their KWL chart.
- Students will write the answers to their questions in the L section of their KWL chart.
- Student will also list any new information learned in the L section of their KWL chart.

Procedure:

- Remind students that they wrote questions in the previous lesson in the W section. These are the things they would like to learn about when reading about their person.
- Review with students the meaning of the L in the KWL chart. (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Review with students how to use the table of contents or index of their book to locate the section in which the answer to their question might be found. Remind them they do not have to read the book cover to cover to find their information.
- Students should remove their KWL chart from their biography report folder and begin using the table of contents and index in their biography books to find the answers to their L section questions.
- When students have completed the L section, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their biography report folders.

Assessment:

- Students can fill in the L section of the KWL chart appropriately.
- Students then receive a check on the teacher's checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. They may need reminders that the L section is for the answers to their W section and any other new information they may have learned. It works out nicely if they write their answers on the line next to where they have written their question. For example, if on line 2 in the W section, a student wrote "When was Helen Keller born?" then on line 2 of the L section, the student should then write when Helen Keller was born. Another suggestion is to have the students write the page number in the margin to the right of the L section where they found the answer to their questions. This may help them remember and quickly locate where that information was found.

Biography Lesson 6

Note-taking – Part 1

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students use their books to complete the note sheets. This will help them to organize the information they are learning about their person.

Materials:

- Students: biography report folder
- Teacher: one book note-taking sheet for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 2–3 one-hour sessions, depending on the abilities of your students and their level of independence.

Objective:

- Students will use the table of contents and index to complete the note-taking sheet.
- Students will begin to organize the information they are leaning about their person into topics and sections.

Procedure:

- Distribute note-taking sheets to students. Draw their attention to the first section that includes the title of the book, the author, and the publishing information. Show the class with a model book where to find the appropriate information.

- Using a transparency of the note-taking sheet, show students how to fill in the information. Then, circulate as needed to help students fill out this section of their worksheet. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Once the title, author, and publishing information have been filled out, go over the rest of the sections with the class, with the transparency. Answer questions and circulate as needed. Remind them to use the table of contents and index in their books to locate the information needed for each section. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Once the note pages are completed, you should make a copy of each child's papers. This way each child will have one copy to keep at school and one copy to take home to plan their presentations.
- When students have completed the note-taking sheet, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their biography report folder.

Assessment:
- The level of thoroughness for the note-taking sheet is to be determined by each individual teacher. It can simply be checked off, each section can be given a score, or the overall paper can be given a score. All options can be marked on the checklist.

Notes to Teacher:
1. A copy of the book note-taking sheet can be found in the appendix.
2. You may want to have a parent volunteer come in on this day as the students tend to have a lot of questions and need a lot of help. One more adult in the room helps to answer all of the questions quickly.

Biography Lesson 7

Note-taking – Part 2

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students use their internet articles to complete the note sheets. This will help them to organize the information they are learning about their person.

Materials:

- Students: biography report folder
- Teacher: one internet article note-taking sheet for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 2–3 one-hour sessions, depending on the abilities of your students and their level of independence.

Objective:

- Students will use the internet article to complete the note-taking sheet.
- Students will begin to organize the information they are leaning about their person into topics and sections.

Procedure:

- Distribute note-taking sheets to students. Draw their attention to the first section that includes the title of the article, author, and website information. Using a transparency of the note-taking sheet, show students how the form is to be completed. Circulate as needed to help students fill out this section of the worksheet.

- Once the title, author, and web site address have been filled out, go over the rest of the sections with the class using the transparency. Answer questions and circulate as needed. (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Once the note pages are completed, you should make a copy of each child's papers. This way each child will have one copy to keep at school and one copy to take home to plan their presentations.
- When students have completed the note-taking sheet, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their biography report folder.

Assessment:

- The level of thoroughness for the note-taking sheet is to be determined by each individual teacher. It can simply be checked off, each section can be given a score, or the overall paper can be given a score. All options can be marked on the checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the internet article note-taking sheet can be found in the appendix.
2. You may want to have a parent volunteer come in on this day as the students tend to have a lot of questions and need a lot of help. One more adult in the room helps to answer all of the questions quickly.

Biography Lesson 8

Note-taking – Part 3

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have students analyze the information they have recorded on their book and internet forms and begin planning their presentations.

Materials:

- Students: biography report folder, book note sheet, internet note sheet
- Teacher: one biography note sheet for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

- **Time:** Allow approximately 1-2 one-hour sessions, depending on the abilities of your students and their level of independence.

Objective:

- Students will analyze the information on their two note-taking sheets and use that information to complete their biography note sheet.
- Students will use information they have learned to plan their presentation to the class.

Procedure:

- Distribute note-taking sheets to students. Using a transparency of the note-taking sheet, review with students how the form is to be completed.
- Circulate as needed to help students fill out the different sections of the worksheet.
- Help students, as needed, to plan what they are going to wear for their costumes and bring for their items of importance. Refer them to your previous

demonstration that occurred before beginning this unit, and let them know that they will see another model by you in an upcoming lesson.

- Once the note pages are completed, you should make a copy of each child's papers. This way each child will have one copy to keep at school and one copy to take home to plan their presentations.
- When students have completed the note-taking sheet, they should show it to the teacher and then place it into their biography report folder.

Assessment:

- The level of thoroughness for the note-taking sheet is to be determined by each individual teacher. It can simply be checked off, each section can be given a score, or the overall paper can be given a score. All options can be marked on the checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the biography note sheet can be found in the appendix.

Biography Lesson 9

Hall of Fame Invitation

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to create an invitation to be used to invite parents, other classrooms, and community members to come to the classroom and see the students dressed up in their biography costumes. (See Notes to Teacher #1.)

Materials:

- Students: pencil, markers, colored pencils, and/or markers
- Teacher: an overhead transparency of the invitation
- Teacher: several copies of the invitation for each student (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Teacher: one invitation rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Teacher: clipboard with animal report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow 45 minutes for this lesson, or more time as needed.
- Allow as much time as you feel necessary to host the Hall of Fame.

Objective:

- Students will be able to fill out an invitation correctly.

Procedure:

- Using the overhead transparency of the invitation, explain each of the sections. Then model how the invitation should be completed.
- Pass out the invitations and allow students time to fill them out. Every student should complete an invitation for family (parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles etc), and another classroom or community member.

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- When they are filled out, students can decorated them.
- Send the invitations home.
- Have the Hall of Fame. (See Notes to Teacher #3.)

Assessment:
- Use the invitation rubric to score each student's invitations. Allow the students to keep their rubrics with their scores in their animal report folders. Record their score on your animal report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:
1. The way I have done this in the past is similar to the animal reports.
1. Before you have the Hall of Fame, but after invitations have gone home, you might want to make formal contact with parents informing them of the importance of student attendance at the after school and before school presentation times.
2. On or before the day of the Hall of Fame, I suggest you make some posters for your door or hallway announcing the Hall of Fame. I also hang streamers from the doorway.
3. Inside your classroom set up desks in a circle or U-shape to allow for traffic flow. Be sure to space the desks so that students have enough room for their items of importance
4. The students are wearing their costumes so that they look like the person they are researching. The person's items of importance are on each student's desk. As the students, teachers, and family or community members come around to visit, each student should introduce him or herself as the person he/she is studying, and then precede to tell the person about him or herself. An example might be a student who has dressed up as Helen Keller. The student would literally say, "Hi, I am Helen Keller. You might have heard of me before. When I was about 2, I lost my vision and my hearing because of a fever I had. I had to learn how to communicate without being able to see or hear. I had a really great teacher named

Annie Sullivan. She taught me sign language and how to read Braille (and so on…)". On that student's desk there might be a pitcher of water, a photo of Annie Sullivan, a diploma, a plate, and a microphone. The student could then explain that the water represents the day she first learned sign language, and that water was the first word she learned. The photo would be in remembrance of her teacher. The diploma would be for the fact that she graduated college despite being both blind and deaf. The plate would be for when she was a young girl and used to go around snatching food off of others' plates during meals. Finally, the microphone would be for the fact that she not only learned to speak, but also for the fact that she actually gave speeches in public in front of many people. These objects could be real, pretend, or even handmade.

5. Allow students time to practice what they will say during the Hall of Fame. You may want to divide the class in half. One half stays at their desks; the other half gets up and wanders through, asking questions. The ones who stay at their desk practice answering questions. Then, have students switch roles so that each child gets to visit and practice answering questions.

6. I have the classroom open for one time during school when other classrooms can come and visit. Then I have an evening and morning times available for parents and community members.

2. A copy of the invitation and invitation rubric can be found in the appendix.

3. I plan the Hall of Fame before the individual presentations so that students have a chance to practice speaking about their biography without being graded before they have to do their presentations to the class for a score.

Biography Lesson 10

Individual Presentation Model/Discussion

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to have a class discussion about what makes a good presentation and to have a question/answer session for students before they give their individual presentations.

Materials:

- Teacher: a model biography different from that presented before beginning the whole biography unit.
- Teacher: one biography oral presentation rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)

Time:

- Allow approximately 60 minutes for this lesson.

Objective:

- Students will discern the differences between a good presentation and a poor presentation.
- Students will create a list of qualities that make a good presentation.

Procedure:

- Tell students that you are going to do a presentation for them. Tell them that you are going to do things that are good for a presentation and things that are not good for a presentation. The students' job is to pick out both the good and bad things. They can use the copy of the rubric to help them.
- Begin your biography presentation, but speak in a very quite voice. Undoubtedly someone in the audience will shout out, "I can't hear you!" When something like

that happens, stop, and address the class as the teacher. Discuss with students how speaking loudly and clearly is important to a good presentation.

- Continue with your presentation speaking loudly and clearly, but wiggle around a lot and act goofy. When one of the students calls you on that, stop and speak to them as the teacher again. Discuss how controlling body movements during a presentation is important so as not to distract the audience from what you are saying.

- Continue with your presentation speaking appropriately and not wiggling, but this time act as if you are unprepared. Say 'um' a lot and give very vague information about the person. If students notice, discuss the importance of practicing at home and being prepared so that they will know what they are going to say and that they have the information they need in their heads or on note cards. If the students do not notice, then switch into a mode of someone who knows exactly what they want to say and gives lots of clear examples. Ask the students to compare the first and second of your methods, ask which is better, and ask why.

- Continue in this way until you have covered all of the important aspects of what you are looking for in your students' presentations.

- When you are finished, create a list of positive presentation qualities with the students and hang it where everyone can see and refer to as they are giving their presentation.

- Hold a question and answer session for your students to answer their questions about their upcoming presentations.

Assessment:

- Student presentations will be assessed later using the biography oral presentation rubric.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the biography oral presentation rubric can be found in the appendix.

Biography Lesson 11

Individual Presentations

Purpose:

- The purpose of the individual presentations is to give each student an opportunity to show what he/she has learned about his/her person to the class. Students have had the opportunity to practice this during the Hall of Fame; they should know what makes a good presentation after the discussions and teacher presentation found in lesson 10.

Materials:

- Students: costume, items of importance, possibly note cards
- Teacher: one biography oral presentation rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow approximately 15 minutes per student.

Objective:

- Students will present the information they have learned about their biography to the class.
- Students can use their items of importance and costumes to give a detailed description of the person and his/her life.
- Students can use their items of importance and costume to plan a presentation for the class.

Procedure:

- Assign preparing for the biography presentations for one week's homework. Use the parent letter found in the appendix. Attach a copy of the presentation rubric to the letter that goes home so students can see how they will be scored. Assign a day to each student and include that information on the letter sent home to parents.

Assessment:

- Use the biography oral presentation rubric to score each student's presentation. Allow the students to keep their rubrics with their scores in their biography report folders. Record their score on your biography report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the biography oral presentation rubric and a letter home to parents about the presentations can be found in the appendix.

Biography Lesson 12

Written Reports

Purpose:

- The purpose of the written reports is to allow students to show what they have learned about the person they are studying in a written format.

Materials:

- Student: pencil, writing notebook or notebook paper, and biography information (book, article, folder, and note sheets)
- Teacher: one writing rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: one sheet of blank paper for each student to make a cover for his/her report
- Teacher: clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow several 45 – 60 minute sessions as needed, depending on the ability and independence of your class.

Objective:

- Students will write a biography of the person they have been studying using the information they have learned through reading a book and internet article.
- Students will write a biography of the person they have been studying using the information they have written down on their note-taking sheets.
- Students will correctly cite their references on a reference page in their paper.

Procedure:

- Tell students it is now their turn to write a biography for the person they have been studying using the information they have read and gathered on their note-taking sheets.

- On a transparency or the chalkboard, create a list of information you expect to be included in each student's paper. Ideas could include but are not limited to: date and place of birth; childhood and adulthood information such as schooling, siblings, friends, or important events and/or accomplishments; date and location of death.

- Discuss with students the importance of sequence and instruct them to begin with the person's birth and move sequentially through his/her life up until current day, if the person is still living, or up until his/her death, if the person has died.

- Show students an example of how to write a reference list for their book and internet article.

- Help students progress through the writing in this fashion: 1) review note-taking sheets and find information to fit the requirements of the teacher; 2) write down needed information; 3) write a rough draft of biography; 4) self-edit and self-revise; 5) 2 peer edits and revisions; 6) final draft; 7) create reference page; 8) design a cover on blank paper for the biography; 9) staple or bind together in some way; 10) turn in to teacher for assessment.

Assessment:

- Use the writing rubric to score each student's biography. Attach the student's rubric to the writing and three hole punch the papers. These are then put into the brads in the student's biography report folder. Record the score on your biography report checklist.

Notes to Teacher:

1. A copy of the writing rubric can be found in the appendix.

Autobiography

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to share about themselves while writing their own autobiography.

Materials:

- Students: pencils, photographs of self from home (See Notes to Teacher #1.)
- Teacher: one copy of the writing rubric for each student (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Teacher: one copy of the autobiography questionnaire for each student (See Notes to Teacher #2.)
- Teacher: enough writing paper for each student's writing
- Teacher: one sheet of blank paper for a cover for each student to make a cover for his/her report
- Teacher: Clipboard with biography report checklist attached

Time:

- Allow several 45 – 60 minute sessions as needed, depending on the ability and independence of your class.

Objectives:

- Students can show what they have learned about biographies by effectively writing their own autobiography.
- Students will know the difference between autobiography and biography.

Procedure:

- Tell students they have one more biography to do – their own! Discuss with students that a biography is a story of someone's life as written by someone else. Now, since they are writing about themselves, it is actually called an autobiography.

- Review with students the list of important items they included in their biography writing. They should include the same information about themselves, plus other facts and information they feel is important and want to have included in their autobiography.

- Help students progress through the writing in this fashion: 1) make a list of the information about themselves they want to include and complete the questionnaire; 2) write a rough draft of their autobiography; 3) self-edit and self-revise; 4) 2 peer edits and revisions; 5) final draft; 6) create a cover for their autobiography on blank paper using photographs brought from home; 7) staple or bind together in some way; 8) turn in to teacher for assessment.

- Use the autobiography letter home to contact parents. It informs them of the autobiography project and the need for the photographs.

- You may also have the students share their autobiographies with the class.

Assessment:

- Use the writing rubric to score each student's autobiography. Attach the rubric to the writing, and return to the student to keep in his/her biography report folder. Record the score on your biography report checklist.

Notes to teacher:

1. Use the autobiography letter home to request students to bring in photographs.
2. A copy of the questionnaire, writing rubric, and letter home can be found in the appendix.

Extension Activities:

- Biographies: Students could interview adults around school or the community and write that person's biography. These could be presented in a Hall of Fame display in the hallway or cafeteria for others to see.

- Biography story problems: Students can use facts like age or lifespan to create story problems.

- Biography poems: Students create an acrostic poem for the person they are studying.

- Crossword puzzles or word searches: Use the websites listed to create crossword puzzles or word searches.
  - Crossword Puzzle Games – Create Puzzles
    http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com
  - Free Online Crossword Puzzle Maker
    http://www.puzzle-maker.com
  - Discovery School's Puzzlemaker
    http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com

- Compare/contrast writing: Use the Venn diagram found in the appendix. Students work in pairs and teach each other enough about their people to be able to fill in all three sections of the diagram. Then, using the information in the diagram, students write a two or three paragraph compare/contrast paper.

- Graphing: Students can use information such as age, ethnicity, number of siblings, etc. to create graphs.

- Mapping: Using a large map of the world, each student can identify the country or countries where his/her person lives/lived. Use a map tack to identify these areas, and then tie a string from the map tack to an index card with the person's name listed or to a picture of the person that is located around the map.

- Pop Up book: Students can make a pop up book to tell facts about their person, or they can create a story about their person.

- Q & A book: Using the Q & A form located in the appendix, each student creates a page of three questions and three answers for his/her person. These questions can come from the KWL chart created in lessons 4 and 5, or they can be questions the child feels are important. All students' pages are collected and compiled into a book for the class. Copies can be run so that each child has a copy of the class's biography book.

- Presentations to other classrooms: In addition to doing the presentations found in lesson 11, these same presentations could be done in other classrooms to teach them about different people, or, the presentations to other classes could take the place of presentations in your classroom.

APPENDIX

Table of Contents for the Appendix

Animal Report Lessons:

Biography Report Lessons:

Student's Names	Vocabulary Hunt (__/16)	Animal selection	Appropriate animal book chosen	Animal report folder decorated	K & W sections completed on KWL chart	L section completed on KWL chart	Note-taking worksheet	Drawing Rubric (__/12)	Poster Rubric (__/20)	Diorama Rubric ___/20	Zoo Invitation Rubric (__/10)	Final Oral Presentation Rubric (__/20)	Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric (__/6)
1													
2													
3													
4													
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25													
26													

Animal Report Lesson 1: Vocabulary Hunt Worksheet

Name: _____   Date: _____

Directions: With your partner, look up each of the words in the dictionary.
Write down the part of the definition that will help you to understand what each
word means as it relates to animals.

- Adapt: _____

  _____

- Amphibian: _____

  _____

- Burrow: _____

  _____

- Carnivorous: _____

  _____

- Cold Blooded: _____

  _____

- Den: _____

  _____

- Food Chain: _____

  _____

- Habitat: _____

  _____

- Herbivorous: _____

  _____

- Hibernate: _____

  _____

- Mammal: _____

  _____

- Omnivorous: _____

  _____

- Predator: _____

  _____

- Prey: _____

  _____

- Reptile: _____

  _____

- Warm-Blooded: _____

  _____

Animal Report Lesson 1: Vocabulary Hunt Worksheet – Answer Key

Name: _____   Date: _____

Directions: With your partner, look up each of the words in the dictionary. Write down the part of the definition that will help you to understand what each word means as it relates to animals.

AHCD = American Heritage Children's Dictionary
WID = Webster's Intermediate Dictionary

- Adapt: (AHCD p. 9) To change so as to be suitable for a different condition or purpose.

- Amphibian: (AHCD p. 26) A cold-blooded animal that lives in water and breathes with gills during its early life. It develops lungs and breathes air as an adult.

- Burrow: (AHCD p. 97) A hole dug in the ground by a small animal.

- Carnivorous: (AHCD p. 109) Feeding in the flesh of animals.

- Cold Blooded: (AHCD p. 138) Having a body temperature that changes according to the temperature of the environment.

- Den: (AHCD p. 192) The shelter or retreat of a wild animal.

- Food Chain: (AHCD p. 280) A series of plants and animals in which each kind is a source of nourishment for the next in the series.

- Habitat: (AHCD p. 325) The place where an animal or plant naturally lives or grows.

- Herbivorous: (WID p. 351) Eating or living on plants.

- Hibernate: (AHCD p. 344) To spend the winter sleeping as some animals do.

- Mammal: (AHCD p. 441) A warm-blooded animal, such as a human being, cat, or whale, that has a backbone, gives birth to live offspring rather than hatching offspring from eggs, and usually has some hair or fur on its body.

- Omnivorous: (WID p. 523) Feeding on both animal and vegetable substances.

- Predator: (AHCD p. 569) An animal that lives by preying on other animals.

- Prey: (AHCD p. 572) An animal hunted or caught by another for food.

- Reptile: (AHCD p. 614) Any of a group of cold-blooded animals that creep or crawl on the ground. Reptiles have backbones and are usually covered with scaly skin.

- Warm Blooded: (AHCD p. 799) Having a body temperature that remains about the same no matter how much the temperature of the surrounding air or water changes.

Animal Report Lesson 4: KWL Chart

What I **K**now	What I Want to **L**earn	What I **L**earned
1)	1)	1)
2)	2)	2)
3)	3)	3)
4)	4)	4)
5)	5)	5)
6)	6)	6)
7)	7)	7)
8)	8)	8)
9)	9)	9)
10)	10)	10)
11)	11)	11)

Name: _____   Animal I am studying: _____

Animal Report Lesson 6: Note Taking Worksheet

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name of your animal: _____

Title of book: _____

Author of book: _____

Publishing Information (date, publishing company and location):

_____

Describe your animal's height, weight, colors, body covering (fur, feathers, scales etc.) & personality:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Are there different kinds of this animal? What other animals is it related to?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Describe your animal's habitat (location, climate, specific home like den/nest):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What does your animal eat? Is it a carnivore, herbivore, or an omnivore?
   What are its prey? What are its predators?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List other important or interesting facts about your animal:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Homework for the weeks of _____

Dear Parents,

For the next two weeks, your child will not have our normal spelling homework. Instead, he/she will need to be working on a project to go with our animal reports. This project is called a diorama. We will not be having any time in class for this project. **All work is to be completed at home.**

For those who have never heard of a diorama, it is an art project involving a box of some kind (shoe boxes are a good size). Remove any lid and lay the box on its side so that the opening is facing you. On the inside, your child will create a scene to depict the environment his/her animal lives in. For example, if your child is studying bears, your child could include trees, rocks, a cave, or a stream. This would all have to be on a much smaller scale to fit inside the box. So, for trees, you would really use small twigs and for rock piles, you would only need pebbles. Paint, markers, clay, or cut out pictures from magazines could also be good supplies.

This is meant to be fun, creative, and educational, but **not expensive. PLEASE do not go out and spend money in order for your child to complete this project**. Many of the objects your child will need could be found around the house or outside.

The dioramas will be **due no later than** _____. We will also be starting our oral presentations for the animal reports on this day, so your child will need to have it in before by this day. Please call with any questions.

Sincerely,

85

Animal Report Lesson 7: Diorama Rubric

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Diorama is turned in on time:

Yes = 1 pt.   No = 0 pts.

Creativity and quality:

High = 3 pts.   Medium = 2 pt.   Low = 1 pt.

Child can explain animal's habitat as it is shown in the diorama:

Explained well = 3 pts.   Adequately Explained = 2 pt.   Poor Explanation = 1 pt.

Child can explain the predator/prey relationships as they are shown in the diorama:

Explained well = 3 pts.   Adequately Explained = 2 pt.   Poor Explanation = 1 pt.

Total: _____ = _____%
　　　　　　10

Animal Report Lesson 8: Drawing Rubric

Student's Name: _____   Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Drawing is neat: (unneeded pencil lines are erased, coloring is in the lines, colors used are appropriate, and drawing is large enough to take up the whole paper).

4	3	2	1	0
4 conditions met	3 conditions met	2 conditions met	1 condition met	0 conditions met

----

At least 5 special features are labeled.

5	4	3	2	1	0
5+ features	4 features	3 features	2 features	1 features	0 features labeled

----

At least 3 of the special features include a description of how the animal uses that feature.

3	2	1	0
3+ descriptions	2 descriptions	1 description	0 descriptions

Total Points: _____/12

Student's Score: _____%

87

Animal Report Lesson 9: Poster Rubric

Student's Name: _____   Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Description Section: The animal's height, weight, colors, body covering (fur, feathers, scales etc.) & personality are included. At least 5 bulleted facts are listed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
5+ facts	4 facts	3 facts	2 facts	1 facts	0 facts

Habitat Section: The animal's location, climate, and specific home like den/nest are included. At least 5 bulleted facts are listed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
5+ facts	4 facts	3 facts	2 facts	1 facts	0 facts

Eating Habits Section: The animal's predators and prey are included, as well as it is stated whether the animal is a carnivore, herbivore, or an omnivore. At least 5 bulleted facts are listed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
5+ facts	4 facts	3 facts	2 facts	1 facts	0 facts

Interesting Facts Section: At least 5 interesting facts are listed. These should be new facts not listed anywhere else on the poster.

5	4	3	2	1	0
5+ facts	4 facts	3 facts	2 facts	1 facts	0 facts

Total Points: _____/20

Student's Score: _____%

You're Invited!!

To: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

_____

_____

Why: _____

RSVP: _____

You're Invited!!

To: <u>Mom and Dad</u>

What: <u>The Bonsonian Zoo</u>

Where: <u>in Mrs. Bonsen's Classroom, room E-11</u>

When: <u>Wednesday, May 18, 2005 from 2:15 pm – 3:00 pm</u>

<u>Wednesday, May 18, 2005 from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm</u>

<u>Thursday, May 19, 2005 from 7:45 am – 8:30 am</u>

Why: <u>To see our wonderful animal reports and talk with animal experts!</u>

RSVP: <u>Please send a note, call, or email Mrs. Bonsen and say which day and</u>

<u>time you plan to come.</u>

Animal Report Lesson 10: Zoo Invitation Rubric

Student's Name: _____   Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Family/Community Member Invitation Rubric
(all three times are listed)

All of the 5 sections are correctly completed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
all 5 sections	4 sections	3 sections	2 sections	1 section	0 sections

---

Classroom Invitation Rubric
(only the school time is listed)

All of the 5 sections are correctly completed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
all 5 sections	4 sections	3 sections	2 sections	1 section	0 sections

---

Total Points: ____/10

Student's Score: _____%

Homework for _____ is to prepare for animal report presentations

In your presentation you will need to:

- Tell the class facts about your animal from each section of your notes sheet – description, habitat, eating habits, and interesting facts – **but you will not read your note sheets out loud to the class.** Note cards are ok. You can also use your poster to help you.

- Explain your diorama to the class. Tell how you decided on the objects and decorations inside and why they are appropriate for your animal. Be sure to tell the class about your animal's habitat and the predator/prey relationships you have shown in your diorama.

Listed below is the schedule. Presentations will begin at approximately _____, and parents are welcome to attend on the day their child is presenting.

Monday   Tuesday   Wednesday   Thursday   Friday

Animal Report Lesson 11: Animal Report Oral Presentation Rubric

Student's Name: _____   Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Animal Oral Explanation:

2	4	6	8	10
poorly explained no details given	few details	adequately explained some details	good details	explained well lots of detail

---

Diorama Explanation:

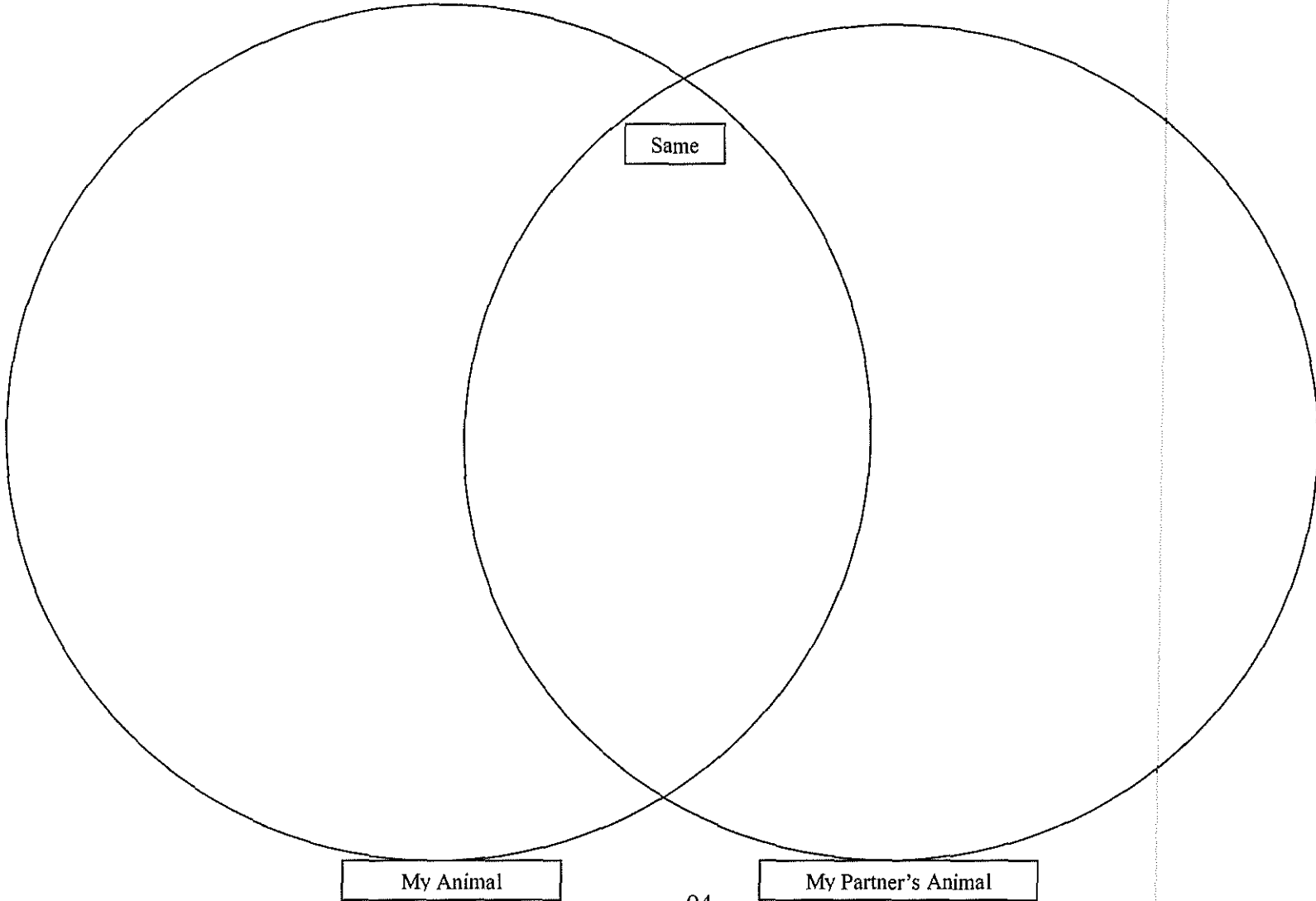| 2	4	6	8	10
poorly explained no details given	few details	adequately explained some details	good details	explained well lots of detail

---

Total Points: _____/20

Student's Score: _____%

Animal Report Extension Activity: Venn Diagram

Same

My Animal

My Partner's Animal

94

Animal Report Extension Activity – Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Content/Organization/Style

Trait	1	2	3	4
Topic	limited attempt to keep sentences on topic	attempts to keep sentences on topic	most sentences stay on topic	stays focused on toipc
Topic	has no supporting details	has few supporting details	has some supporting details	has many supporting details
Organization/Sentence Fluency	organizes writing with no beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with limited beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with some beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end
Organization	no transitions	uses transitions that are weak	uses transitions in an attempt to connect ideas	uses transitions to clearly connect ideas
Sentence Fluency	sentences are like a list	sentences are all the same length	uses sentences that are more than 1 length (short, medium, or long)	uses sentences that are different lengths (short, medium, and long)
Word Choice/Voice	writes with little or no voice	writes with little voice	writes with some voice	writes with voice
Audience/Purpose	no attempt to interest the audience	little interest for the audience	writes to make the audience interested	writes to make the audience interested

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Animal Report Extension Activity – Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Conventions

Conventions	0	1	2
	mostly does not follow rules of standard English for usage	generally follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)	consistently follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)
	mostly does not follow rules for spelling of commonly used words	generally follows rules for spelling of commonly used words	consistently follows rules for spelling of commonly used words.
	mostly does not follow rules for capitalization and punctuation	general use of capitalization and punctuation	consistent use of capitalization and punctuation
	exhibits errors in sentence strucure that impede communication	generally uses complete sentences (except where meaningful phrases are used for effect)	consistently uses complete sentences (execept where purposeful phrases are used for effect)
	mostly does not indicate paragraphs	mostly indicates paragraphs	indicates paragraphs consistently

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

All About Animals:

A Question and Answer Book

By:

Mrs. Bonsen's Class
2005 - 2006

Animal Report Extension Activity: Question and Answer Book Form

Name: _____   Animal I am studying: _____

Q1. _____

A1. _____

Q2. _____

A2. _____

Q3. _____

A3. _____

Introduction Paragraph (short, 2-4 sentences):

- Use a question to grab the reader's attention.
  - It can be at the beginning or the end of the paragraph.
- Use an interesting fact to interest the reader.

Description Paragraph (long, 7-10 sentences):

- Tell specific facts about <u>your</u> animal, like its height, weight, colors, body covering, and personality.
- What makes it special/different from other animals?
- Are there any special features?
- Use each fact in a sentence – DON'T JUST LIST FACTS!

Habitat Paragraph (medium, 5-7 sentences):

- In what countries or continents is it found?
- In what kind of a climate does it live?
- Does it like the desert, forests, mountains, oceans, or grasslands?
- SPECIFIC: Trees, water, rocks, cave etc.
- Does your animal have a specific sleeping place (den, nest)?
- Is it nocturnal?

Eating Paragraph (medium, 5-7 sentences):

- Is your animal a carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore?
- What does it eat? What is its prey?
- What are its predators?
- Does it have special eating/hunting habits?

Conclusion Paragraph (short, 4-5 sentences):

- Your opinion of the animal and **<u>WHY.</u>**
- Some interesting facts.
- Good conclusion sentence.

Animal Report Extension Activity – Written Report Rubric
Content/Organization/Style

Trait	1	2	3	4
Topic	limited attempt to keep sentences on topic	attempts to keep sentences on topic	most sentences stay on topic	stays focused on toipc
Topic	has no supporting details	has few supporting details	has some supporting details	has many supporting details
Organization/Sentence Fluency	organizes writing with no beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with limited beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with some beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end
Organization	no transitions	uses transitions that are weak	uses transitions in an attempt to connect ideas	uses transitions to clearly connect ideas
Sentence Fluency	sentences are like a list	sentences are all the same length	uses sentences that are more than 1 length (short, medium, or long)	uses sentences that are different lengths (short, medium, and long)
Word Choice/Voice	writes with little or no voice	writes with little voice	writes with some voice	writes with voice
Audience/Purpose	no attempt to interest the audience	little interest for the audience	writes to make the audience interested	writes to make the audience interested

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Animal Report Extension Activity – Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Conventions

Conventions	0	1	2
	mostly does not follow rules of standard English for usage	generally follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)	consistently follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)
	mostly does not follow rules for spelling of commonly used words	generally follows rules for spelling of commonly used words	consistently follows rules for spelling of commonly used words.
	mostly does not follow rules for capitalization and punctuation	general use of capitalization and punctuation	consistent use of capitalization and punctuation
	exhibits errors in sentence strucure that impede communication	generally uses complete sentences (except where meaningful phrases are used for effect)	consistently uses complete sentences (execept where purposeful phrases are used for effect)
	mostly does not indicate paragraphs	mostly indicates paragraphs	indicates paragraphs consistently

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Student's Names	Biography Selection	Appropriate book chosen	Biogrpahy report folder decorated	Internet article found	K & W Sections completed on KWL chart	L section complted on KWL chart	Book note-taking	Internet article note-taking	Biography note sheet	Hall of Fame Invitation Rubric __/10	Biography Oral Presentation Rubric __/16	Biography Written Report Rubric /6	Questionnaire	Autobiography Rubric __/6
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														
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17														
18														
19														
20														
21														
22														
23														
24														
25														

Biography Report Lesson 4: KWL Chart

What I **K**now:	What I **W**ant to Learn	What I've **L**earned
1)	1)	1)
2)	2)	2)
3)	3)	3)
4)	4)	4)
5)	5)	5)
6)	6)	6)
7)	7)	7)
8)	8)	8)
9)	9)	9)
10)	10)	10)
11)	11)	11)

Name: _____   Person I am studying: _____

Biography Report Lesson 6: Book Note-Taking Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title of your book: _____

Author: _____

Biography of: _____

Copyright information: _____

_____

Write a summary of what you have learned about this person:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your opinion, what is the most interesting fact from this book and why?

_____

_____

_____

How would you describe this person? Include physical description, but also describe his/her personality (e.g. shy or outgoing, funny or serious).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you could meet this person, what questions would you ask him/her?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Biography Report Lesson 7: Internet Article Note-Taking Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title of your article: _____

Author: _____

Biography of: _____

Web site address and date: _____

_____

Write a summary of what you have learned about this person:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your opinion, what is the most interesting fact from this article and why?

_____

_____

_____

In addition to what you learned in your book, is there any information from this article that further describes this person's personality or physical characteristics? Write it below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Compare yourself to this person. Tell at least three similarities and three differences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Lesson 8: Biography Note Sheet

Name of person: _____

Birthplace and birth date: _____

Family members: _____

_____

List at least 5 interesting facts about this person.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List two important dates in the person's life and tell what happened.

- _____

_____

- _____

_____

Information that will help me plan my costume:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Information that will help me plan my items of importance:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What made you chose to study this person? Why were you interested in reading about this person's life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You're Invited!!

To: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

_____

_____

Why: _____

RSVP: _____

You're Invited!!

To: <u>Mom and Dad</u>

What: <u>The Hall of Fame</u>

Where: <u>in Mrs. Bonsen's Classroom, room E-11</u>

When: <u>Wednesday, May 18, 2005 from 2:15 pm – 3:00 pm</u>

<u>Wednesday, May 18, 2005 from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm</u>

<u>Thursday, May 19, 2005 from 7:45 am – 8:30 am</u>

Why: <u>To see our biography reports and talk with some famous people!</u>

RSVP: <u>Please send a note, call, or email Mrs. Bonsen and say which day and</u>

<u>time you plan to come.</u>

Biography Report Lesson 9: Hall of Fame Invitation Rubric

Student's Name: _____   Date: _____

Student's Animal: _____

Family/Community Member Invitation Rubric
(all three times are listed)

All of the 5 sections are correctly completed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
all 5 sections	4 sections	3 sections	2 sections	1 section	0 sections

----

Classroom Invitation Rubric
(only the school time is listed)

All of the 5 sections are correctly completed.

5	4	3	2	1	0
all 5 sections	4 sections	3 sections	2 sections	1 section	0 sections

----

Total Points: _____/10

Student's Score: _____%

Biography Report Lesson 10: Biography Oral Presentation Rubric

Dressing as your character:

4 – Exceptional effort in dress/costume that reflects your character is shown. Child is able to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

3 – Child is dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character. Child is able to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

2 – Child is dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character but is unable to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

1 – Child is not dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character.

Informing your audience:

4 – All questions (from the letter home) are fully answered, and the child includes at least three additional pieces of information or interesting facts about the person.

3 – All questions (from the letter home) are fully answered.

2 – One or two of the questions (from the letter home) are not fully answered.

1 – More than two of the questions (from the letter home) are not fully answered.

Speaking/presenting as your character:

4 – Includes all of number 3 and reacts especially well to audience.

3 – Child speaks clearly and loudly enough for everyone to hear, makes eye contact with the audience, and avoids laughing and/or losing focus.

2 – Child lacks one of the above from number 3.

1 – Child lacks two or more of the above from number 3.

Items of importance:

4 – Includes number 3, but exceptional effort is evident (especially if some items are home-made or very creative).

3 – Includes at least 5 items of importance to the character and is able to fully explain the importance of each one to the audience.

2 – Child lacks one or two items of importance or is unable to fully explain the importance of any item.

1 – Child lacks more than two items of importance.

Biography worksheets:

4 – Includes number 3 but exceptional effort is evident.

3 – Biography worksheets are <u>well done</u>, <u>fully completed</u>, and <u>turned in on time.</u>

2 – Child lacks one of the criteria from number 3.

1 – Child lacks more than one of the criteria from number 3.

Score = _____ /20

_____ %

Teacher comments:

Biography Report Lesson 11: Biography Oral Presentation Letter Home

Dear Parents and Students,

We have begun our biography reports. Each student is already reading a biography book and internet article on the person he/she selected to study. The deadline to be finished is _____ . Homework for the week of _____ will be preparing for the biography presentation. Biography presentations will take place during the week of _____ .

Students will give an oral presentation to the class <u>as the person they have studied</u>. These are the requirements for a successful biography report:

1. **<u>Dress as the person would be dressed.</u>** Follow descriptions and look at pictures from both the book and internet article. Be prepared to explain your costume/clothing to the class.

2. **<u>Tell us about the life of the person, speaking as if you are that person.</u>** Here are some questions to guide you:
   - What is your name?
   - Who are you?
   - What problems or situations did you encounter in your life?
   - How did you handle or solve the problems or situations?
   - What are some important dates in your life?
   - What are some reasons you are famous or well-known?
   - Are there any other interesting facts about you that we should know?

3. **<u>Bring in at least 5 – 10 items that are significant and represent the person's experiences in life.</u>** Show them to the class and explain why each item has importance. For example, if you are reading about a famous tennis player, you might want to bring in a tennis racket.

4. **<u>At the conclusion of your presentation, be prepared to answer these questions, speaking as yourself.</u>**
   - Why did you choose this person to study?
   - If you could meet this person, what question(s) would you like to ask him/her?
   - What are some similarities and differences between you and the person you studied?

5. **Review the attached rubric** so that you know ahead of time how you will be graded on your presentation.

PLEASE ask all of your questions ahead of time and be prepared to present on the day you are assigned.

My presentation is scheduled for: _____ **(date)**

_____ **(approximate time)**

Dressing as your character:

4 – Exceptional effort in dress/costume that reflects your character is shown. Child is able to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

3 – Child is dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character. Child is able to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

2 – Child is dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character but is unable to support the choice of dress with examples from the reading.

1 – Child is not dressed in clothing/costume that reflects the character.

Informing your audience:

4 – All questions (from the letter home) are fully answered, and the child includes at least three additional pieces of information or interesting facts about the person.

3 – All questions (from the letter home) are fully answered.

2 – One or two of the questions (from the letter home) are not fully answered.

1 – More than two of the questions (from the letter home) are not fully answered.

Speaking/presenting as your character:

4 – Includes all of number 3 and reacts especially well to audience.

3 – Child speaks clearly and loudly enough for everyone to hear, makes eye contact with the audience, and avoids laughing and/or losing focus.

2 – Child lacks one of the above from number 3.

1 – Child lacks two or more of the above from number 3.

Items of importance:

4 – Includes number 3, but exceptional effort is evident (especially if some items are home-made or very creative).

3 – Includes at least 5 items of importance to the character and is able to fully explain the importance of each one to the audience.

2 – Child lacks one or two items of importance or is unable to fully explain the importance of any item.

1 – Child lacks more than two items of importance.

Biography worksheets:

4 – Includes number 3 but exceptional effort is evident.

3 – Biography worksheets are <u>well done</u>, <u>fully completed</u>, and <u>turned in on time.</u>

2 – Child lacks one of the criteria from number 3.

1 – Child lacks more than one of the criteria from number 3.

Score = _____ /20

_____ %

Teacher comments:

Biography Report Lesson 12: Writing Rubric
Content/Organization/Style

Trait	1	2	3	4
Topic	limited attempt to keep sentences on topic	attempts to keep sentences on topic	most sentences stay on topic	stays focused on toipc
Topic	has no supporting details	has few supporting details	has some supporting details	has many supporting details
Organization/Sentence Fluency	organizes writing with no beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with limited beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with some beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end
Organization	no transitions	uses transitions that are weak	uses transitions in an attempt to connect ideas	uses transitions to clearly connect ideas
Sentence Fluency	sentences are like a list	sentences are all the same length	uses sentences that are more than 1 length (short, medium, or long)	uses sentences that are different lengths (short, medium, and long)
Word Choice/Voice	writes with little or no voice	writes with little voice	writes with some voice	writes with voice
Audience/Purpose	no attempt to interest the audience	little interest for the audience	writes to make the audience interested	writes to make the audience interested

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Animal Report Extension Activity – Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Conventions

Conventions	0	1	2
	mostly does not follow rules of standard English for usage	generally follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)	consistently follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)
	mostly does not follow rules for spelling of commonly used words	generally follows rules for spelling of commonly used words	consistently follows rules for spelling of commonly used words.
	mostly does not follow rules for capitalization and punctuation	general use of capitalization and punctuation	consistent use of capitalization and punctuation
	exhibits errors in sentence strucure that impede communication	generally uses complete sentences (except where meaningful phrases are used for effect)	consistently uses complete sentences (execept where purposeful phrases are used for effect)
	mostly does not indicate paragraphs	mostly indicates paragraphs	indicates paragraphs consistently

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Lesson 13: Autobiography Letter Home

Dear Parents,

The biography reports have gone very well. The students have done a wonderful job in their reading and presentation. Thanks for all of the help that I know you put in behind the scenes!

As the concluding activity, I would like the students to write their own autobiography. Your student will have a list of questions and writing ideas that he/she may bring home to get more information or answers. Could you please help your student find some pictures that would go along with or enhance his/her autobiography? (Please make sure they are pictures you have a copy of or are not irreplaceable – you never know what might happen!) Thank you again for all of your help and support during this school project.

Sincerely,

Biography Lesson 13: Questionnaire

Name: _____

- When and where were you born?

  _____

  _____

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

  _____

- Where have you lived and what schools have you gone to?

  _____

  _____

- What chores do you have to do? Which ones do you like? Which ones do you dislike?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- Do you now, or have you ever, had any pets? What kind of animals are they? What are their names?

  _____

  _____

- What are your favorite things to do?

  _____

  _____

List some of your important dates and firsts:

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

What is your favorite?

Color:	_____
TV show:	_____
Sport:	_____
Hobby:	_____
Holiday:	_____
Number:	_____
Subject:	_____
Other:	_____

- What is the most interesting thing about you?

_____

_____

_____

- Do you have any special talents?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Biography Report Lesson 13: Writing Rubric - Autobiography
Content/Organization/Style

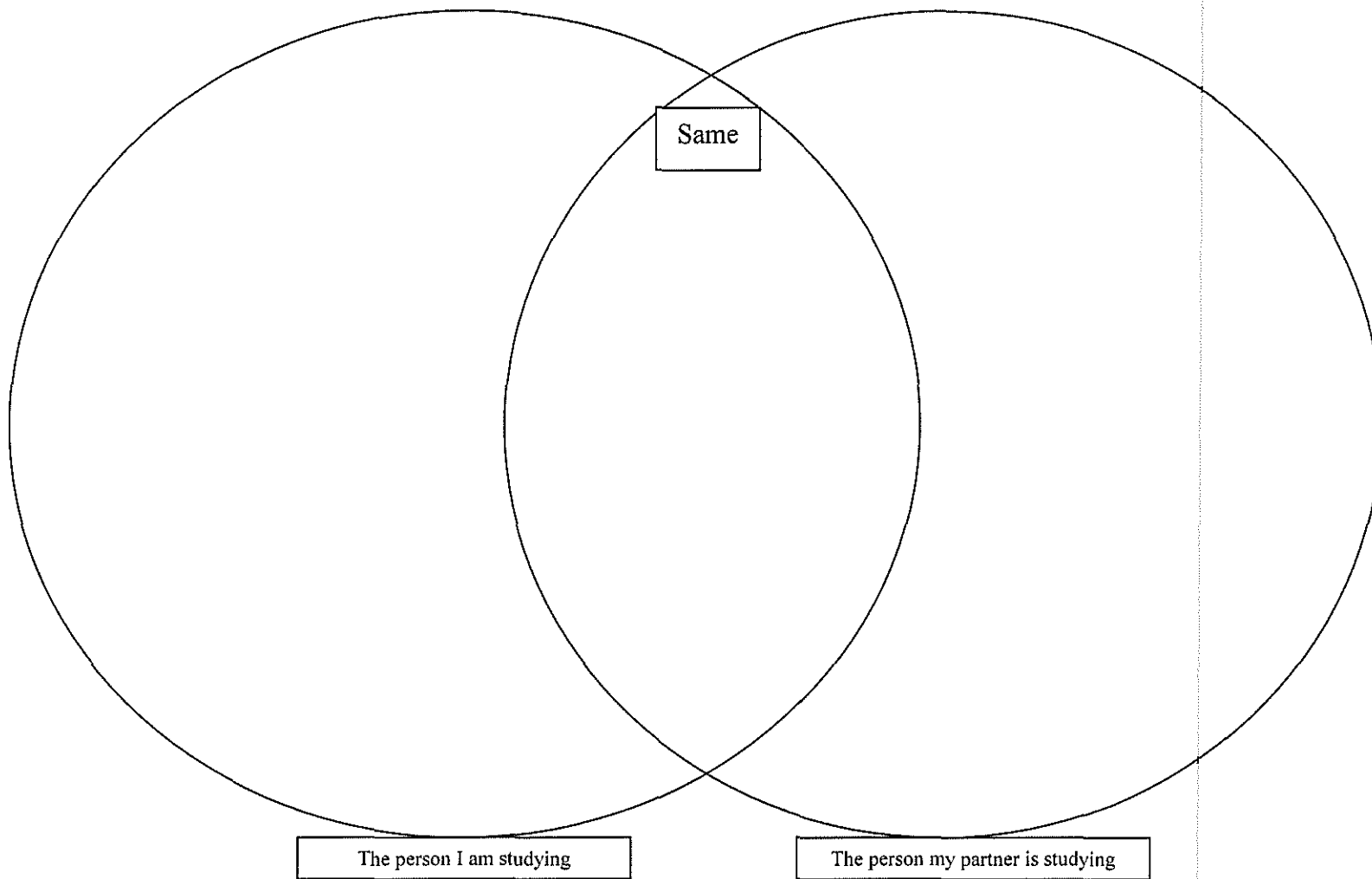| Trait	1	2	3	4
Topic	limited attempt to keep sentences on topic	attempts to keep sentences on topic	most sentences stay on topic	stays focused on toipc
Topic	has no supporting details	has few supporting details	has some supporting details	has many supporting details
Organization/Sentence Fluency	organizes writing with no beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with limited beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with some beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end
Organization	no transitions	uses transitions that are weak	uses transitions in an attempt to connect ideas	uses transitions to clearly connect ideas
Sentence Fluency	sentences are like a list	sentences are all the same length	uses sentences that are more than 1 length (short, medium, or long)	uses sentences that are different lengths (short, medium, and long)
Word Choice/Voice	writes with little or no voice	writes with little voice	writes with some voice	writes with voice
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(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Biography Report Lesson 13: Writing Rubric - Autobiography
Conventions

Conventions	0	1	2
	mostly does not follow rules of standard English for usage	generally follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)	consistently follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)
	mostly does not follow rules for spelling of commonly used words	generally follows rules for spelling of commonly used words	consistently follows rules for spelling of commonly used words.
	mostly does not follow rules for capitalization and punctuation	general use of capitalization and punctuation	consistent use of capitalization and punctuation
	exhibits errors in sentence strucure that impede communication	generally uses complete sentences (except where meaningful phrases are used for effect)	consistently uses complete sentences (execept where purposeful phrases are used for effect)
	mostly does not indicate paragraphs	mostly indicates paragraphs	indicates paragraphs consistently

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Biography Report Extension Activity: Venn Diagram

Same

The person I am studying

The person my partner is studying

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Biography Report Extension Activity: Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Content/Organization/Style

Trait	1	2	3	4
Topic	limited attempt to keep sentences on topic	attempts to keep sentences on topic	most sentences stay on topic	stays focused on toipc
Topic	has no supporting details	has few supporting details	has some supporting details	has many supporting details
Organization/Sentence Fluency	organizes writing with no beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with limited beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with some beginning, middle, and end	organizes writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end
Organization	no transitions	uses transitions that are weak	uses transitions in an attempt to connect ideas	uses transitions to clearly connect ideas
Sentence Fluency	sentences are like a list	sentences are all the same length	uses sentences that are more than 1 length (short, medium, or long)	uses sentences that are different lengths (short, medium, and long)
Word Choice/Voice	writes with little or no voice	writes with little voice	writes with some voice	writes with voice
Audience/Purpose	no attempt to interest the audience	little interest for the audience	writes to make the audience interested	writes to make the audience interested

(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Biography Report Extension Activity – Compare/Contrast Writing Rubric
Conventions

Conventions	0	1	2
	mostly does not follow rules of standard English for usage	generally follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)	consistently follows subject/verb agreement - tenses (e.g. He went home. We are going home.)
	mostly does not follow rules for spelling of commonly used words	generally follows rules for spelling of commonly used words	consistently follows rules for spelling of commonly used words.
	mostly does not follow rules for capitalization and punctuation	general use of capitalization and punctuation	consistent use of capitalization and punctuation
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(This document was created by 3rd/4th grade teachers at Lince Elementary, Selah, Washington, Spring 2005.)

Fantastic Facts about Famous Folks:

A Question and Answer Book

By:

Mrs. Bonsen's Class
2005 - 2006

Biography Report Extension Activity: Question and Answer Book Form

Name: _____   Person I am studying: _____

Q1. _____

A1. _____

Q2. _____

A2. _____

Q3. _____

A3. _____

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

A new variant on the traditional style, single age classroom has emerged. It is called looping. Looping is when a teacher stays with the same class for two years or more (Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996). During this extended time together, the teacher and students have more time to get to know each other and build relationships. More learning can occur because the second year (and third and fourth and so on) can begin right away without the teacher having to spend time getting to know her students, reviewing material, and testing each student to find his learning level. The teacher already knows her students, their learning levels and abilities, and the materials taught from the previous year.

The development of the looping classroom can be attributed to teachers' desire to instruct their students in the best ways possible. They make changes in philosophies, teaching strategies, and classroom organization continually. Many different organizational designs for classrooms can be found throughout the last century and before. Waldorf Schools, where students often stayed with their teachers from first to eighth grade, began in 1919 in Germany (Foster, 1984). One-teacher schools were found throughout the United States in the early 1900s and continue even to today with one teacher instructing a small group of different aged students year after year (Schoettger, 2003). Multiage classrooms consist of two or more grade levels being instructed by one teacher at the same time as if they were one (Miller, 1996). Single-age classrooms began

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in U.S. in the 19th century, when Horace Mann brought the idea from Prussia (Grant, 1991). In this style classroom, students are all of approximately the same age and only stay with their teacher for one school year. A combination classroom takes some children from two grade levels (such as second and third) and combines them into one classroom (Mason & Burns, 1995). In this style, the second grade students would learn second grade material, and the third grade students would learn third grade material. Finally, there are the non-graded or un-graded classrooms. This style of classroom has no grade-level distinction, and students are grouped on "the basis not of age but of perceived readiness to acquire knowledge and skills" (Privett, 1996, p. 9). All of these styles of classrooms, whether in concept, design, or instruction, played some part in the development of or theory behind the looping classroom.

The handbook found in Chapter 4 is designed for teachers in a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom. The lessons integrate reading and writing, and the second year (fourth grade) builds upon skills and strategies introduced in the first year (third grade). The third grade set of lessons focuses study on animals while the fourth grade set of lessons focuses on biographies. The handbook contains a GLE/Lesson plan matrix, information for teachers before beginning both sets of lessons, twelve third grade lessons, thirteen fourth grade lessons, and extension activities for both the animal and biography units of study. The final section in the handbook is an appendix that contains every worksheet needed to complete the lessons.

CONCLUSIONS

While spending four years in a looping cycle (two cycles of a third to fourth

loop), the author of this project wanted to create lessons to use with her students that took

advantage of the benefits of looping. The author recognized the possibility of introducing

skills and beginning activities in the first year with her students, and then coming back to

those skills and lessons in the second year. It was a unique situation, knowing she had a

two-year responsibility for these children and wanting to create something meaningful

and full of learning potential. Already having a small third grade animal report unit and

fourth grade biography unit in place, the author strove to expand both and make them

more cohesive. The result is two units of study on different subjects that follow a close

pattern of instruction, with the fourth grade unit reviewing strategies and increasing

students' skills developed in third grade.

One of the best things about doing these units is sharing them with family,

friends, and the other students in the school. When younger students come into the

classroom during presentations of either the third or fourth grade projects, they always

ask if they will get to do this someday. Parents are always impressed with their child's

work, and they are surprised to see the improvement in their child's work in the

biography project over that found in the animal project. The best part, however, may be

the students' pride in their projects. They are so careful as they arrange materials on their

desks before people come in. They are so eager to share, explain, and tell about every

little part, and at the same time, they are nervous about sharing information – just as they

might be before doing a play or skit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When a teacher wants to study insects, Pilgrims, or China (or nearly any other topic), she can simply search the Internet for lesson plans or go to the teacher supply store and find a book to use. However, when a looping teacher wants to find materials to use in her looping classroom sadly she is out of luck. In this author's experience, there is nothing available to her, purposefully created for use during the two-year span of a looping classroom. This author believes that, if looping is an organizational structure that is going to remain and flourish, curriculum, teacher materials, activities, and such should be developed to take advantage of the benefits of a looping classroom.

One limitation of this handbook is that it was developed for a third-to-fourth grade looping classroom. The lessons contained would not be appropriate for students of other grade levels without modification. Kindergarten through second grade students would probably love the topic of animals, though interest in biographies might be less. Also, finding nonfiction reading material at an independent level for these students could be difficult. In addition, the creation of the poster and presenting at the zoo might be somewhat beyond their abilities. Younger students would also need to have much more time and a slower pace to complete many of the activities. Older students may need more of a challenge and higher expectations on the rubrics. Another idea would be to require a written report for the animal project. Finally, one could take the basic premise of each project, and choose another topic. So, instead of learning about animals and biographies, students could do projects on countries and inventors.

Both students with special needs or English Language Learners (ELL) can participate in these activities with much success. During the four year, two-loop cycle this author taught looping classrooms, students in both categories completed the animal and biography reports successfully. Modifying the lessons to fit each student's learning abilities was just one way of helping these students succeed. Parents of the children often helped out during work time in the classroom, and sometimes, work was completed in the Resource Room with the Resource Room teacher. This author believes that establishing a positive relationship with parents and the Resource Room teacher, with the student's educational success in mind, was critical.

Looping teachers have the great privilege of staying with the same children for more than one year. The extra year together should not be wasted. Instead, purposeful teaching that takes advantage of the extra time should be used. It is this author's hope that more curriculum, thematic units, or other activities are created so that teachers can spend their time implementing and modifying those materials, rather than having to develop one themselves. Developing these units is not easy, though, the pride and joy each student found in his or her project made all of this hard work worthwhile!

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