

Summer 2018

Flexible Reading Groups And Social Emotional Needs In A First Grade Classroom

Miranda Pogulis
Hamline University

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FLEXIBLE READING GROUPS AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS IN A FIRST GRADE
CLASSROOM

by

Miranda Pogulis

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in Literacy Education

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

August 2018

Advisor: Vivian Johnson

Content Expert: Kari Ross

Peer Reviewer: Krista Jibben

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CHAPTER ONE

My Interest in Flexible Groups and Social Emotional Learning

Chapter Overview

Through my experience and knowledge of differentiated small group instruction and what I have been noticing with students reactions to other students in their own and the other reading groups, I have come to the research question of, how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times?

As an elementary teacher, my experience in a first grade classroom is that a variety of small group instruction occurs throughout a school day. This gives students an opportunity to get more individualized instruction and practice of a skill with a teacher. This also allows teachers to more easily differentiate instruction and to better see which students understand or need more practice with a skill. When talking about differentiating instruction, Knowles (2009) states,

The most important premise of differentiated instruction is recognition that even in a group of students with the same chronological age, each child is different. Today's students have many differences, background knowledge, learning styles, interests, and skills, to name a few. One size fits all learning is no longer seen as the way to teach students. (p. 26)

In my experience as a reading teacher I have found it is easier to get to know my students on a deeper level and easier to meet their learning needs by differentiating through small group instruction.

Throughout this first chapter you will learn about my background in learning to read and teaching reading. Also, my passion for small group instruction and the challenges and successes of this time in my classroom which has brought me to this research question.

My Experience Learning and Teaching Reading

As a child I remember reading together as a class out of textbooks or basal readers. Dewitz and Jones (2012) define a basal reader as, “. . . a complex collection of reading selections, support materials, and assessments held together by a hefty teacher's edition” (p. 392). In elementary school, we did round robin and popcorn reading where each student took turns reading out loud while the rest of the class follows along. I have been a strong reader since early elementary school and have always loved reading but doing these out loud reading activities always made me super nervous and caused me anxiety about making a mistake that would cause the other students to laugh at me. At times this anxiety was so high when my turn was going to happen that I was not really paying attention to what other students were reading, just hoping to read correctly when it was my turn.

My first year teaching (2008 - 2009), the curriculum used was a basal reader and I used those same class reading strategies that caused myself anxiety growing up. Looking back on that first year of teaching makes me feel horrible for putting those students in that situation. Thinking about how anxious those activities made me while in school as a strong reader makes me think about my students who struggle with reading and how much stress that might have caused them. I always want to encourage students and build their confidence as a reader, during my first year teaching I am not sure this was accomplished. Having learned new ways of teaching reading and with new learning gained through this project, my goal is to never again put

a learner in the position where they may be anxious about reading out loud in a large or small group.

In my fourth year of teaching, I moved to a school where guided reading instruction was expected for teaching reading. In a chart labeled summary of balanced reading approaches, Jan Richardson (2009) describes guided reading as a small group time where students read texts at their instructional level and this will vary for each student. She states that students read independently and the teacher is there as a coach. Also, the purpose of guided reading is for students to practice reading strategies with support from the teacher and it is also for the teacher to differentiate instruction based on what each student or group needs.

In this district where I was teaching with guided reading, there was no reading curriculum provided by the district, the standards were what were expected to be taught. At times this was difficult because as teachers, my team did not have much guidance of the expectations of reading instruction. Lacking guidance, the team created a scope and sequence that we worked off of and then adjusted for reading groups. While guided reading takes more planning time, I found that this form of teaching allowed me to meet students where they were at, to help build their confidence, and then better challenge them to grow as a reader.

In addition to guided reading, throughout my career as a teacher I have found three strategies that have helped me be the most successful in teaching reading. First, I have found that small group reading instruction allows me to differentiate for my students needs and get to know my students better as a learner which helps me better understand their strengths and areas of growth. While in a small group, I have been able to challenge above grade level readers with harder texts and extra writing and comprehension practice. I have also been able to meet my approaching grade level readers with extra practice with sight words and more tricks on how to

decode hard words all while still meeting grade level comprehension expectations. Being able to differentiate for students helps each child to reach their potential. When I was teaching all whole group I was not meeting each child's needs. By teaching in a small group and being able to differentiate the instruction I can meet each child where they are at and then challenge them to continue to grow.

A second strategy useful to me are running records that have been used both as formative assessment to inform my instruction and summative assessment to measure growth. A running record according to Fawson, Reutzel, Smith, Ludlow, and Sudweeks (2006) is defined as:

A test of contextual reading accuracy and student strategy use in which students read leveled connected passages under untimed conditions. The examiner typically makes a record of the types of errors (e.g., deletions, insertions, omissions) that each reader commits during oral reading. (p. 113)

Using running records during small group reading instruction has helped me see where my students were at and what skills or strategies I needed to help them with. By completing and analyzing these assessments I was able to use texts that were at each student's level which helped them to feel successful, then I was able to challenge them to continue to grow from there. I was also able to adjust groups as needed as student's needs changed throughout the year. By doing guided reading groups I really get to know my students better individually and as readers than I did when using a basal reader which did not give provide opportunities to do guided reading.

The third instructional strategy that has helped me be successful as a teacher is building relationships with students. Building these relationships has helped me to get to know them as a learner and as a person. Although I am constantly getting to know and interacting with students,

I have found small group instruction helps me to know my students better because I feel I get more time with each student in a small group versus a large group.

Through quick informal conversations about a text or while switching activities in a small group, I sometimes learn about an interest a student has, a place a student has been, or something they have done with their family. By getting to know my students better I am able to find texts that connect with their interests and experiences which helps students to be more engaged in the text. At times this can really help me to challenge a student in their reading abilities because they are more connected to the text. Small group instruction has helped me to get to know my students interests more which has helped me to be able to incorporate their interests into our learning and challenge our reading in more ways. These three strategies have helped me challenge learners in many ways, now I am curious to know how to make my teaching even stronger.

While I have already seen benefits in small group reading instruction, I am interested in knowing how to better serve students while teaching reading in small groups. I have grouped students with peers who are at the same ability levels in reading as them and I have grouped students by mixed ability levels. I am curious to find out if one way or another is more effective for helping students grow to their highest potential.

Aside from looking at methods of grouping students, I am also interested in the impact of rearranging groups during the school year. One challenge I always have had was when I would switch students to a different group because some students struggle when a new student joins a group, a student leaves a group, or they are asked to join a group. In the past small group instruction has been successful in my classroom by grouping students according to reading level and keeping them in those groups until someone needed to move to a different group to meet

their needs. I found that when a student was switched to a different group there would be confusion by the student moving groups and the students who did not change groups. I have found the students were so used to these groups, which was good for a positive community, that they struggled when these changes happened. In my classroom there have also been times when some students were viewed differently because of the group they were put in.

For example, one year I had a group of four students whose goal was to learn all of the letter names and sounds as they were still trying to master this skill. Two of the students from this group left the room twice a day to meet with a special education teacher. One day I overheard two boys from another reading group making fun of one of the other students in that reading group and asking if he was going to have to go with that teacher now too. This broke my heart. This is also when I started thinking about how to best group students for small group reading instruction. It made me wonder how is it possible to still give students the skills they need and also allow students opportunities to learn with and from other students in the room. It also makes me wonder how the grouping of students and changing these groups makes students feel and how it affects our classroom community?

At the start of this project I was in my ninth school year of teaching (2008 - 2017) with almost all of those years in primary grades. I spent the first eight of those years in schools in a large metropolitan area. For the 2017 - 2018 school year I moved out of state and am now teaching in a rural school district in a different state. The current school that I am teaching at groups students by ability for reading and math across the grade level. This means that many students leave their homeroom teachers for reading and/or math and they are mixed with students from the other first grade homeroom classes. This is new to me because I am use to having my

homeroom students all day with the exception of pull out services for special education, interventions, and specials such as music, physical education, or media time.

This is a big adjustment for me having three different groups of students throughout the day. After what I have experienced in this new school grouping the entire grade level and grouping students for small group instruction at my past school it has made me wonder how grouping the entire grade level has positive or negative impacts on students emotions and learning. By doing this research the objective is to find more information about grouping students and the impact on their social and emotional needs and to take what I learn and share it with my coworkers and administrators. For now, I have my group of “above level” reading students who I will challenge and provide the best literacy opportunities I can to help them thrive in their reading and writing.

Using my past experiences in the classroom and what I learn from the literature review, my goal is to create a curriculum to bring another way for teachers to meet student’s social emotional needs to help them grow as a reader. Building lifelong learners is a goal of mine and many educators. Building a classroom community and a space where students feel comfortable having authentic conversations about a text at an early age will help each of these readers thrive as they progress through school and life. Also focusing on meeting and building student’s social emotional needs at an early age and incorporating it into their small group reading times will, I hope, give students the confidence to take on the challenge of a harder text and know they can do it. I also hope teaching and having students do self-reflection will help give them the confidence to advocate for what they need as a learner at a young age and as they continue through their education career and life. Practice and use of all of these skills will help students grow to their highest potential as a literacy learner.

Curriculum Project Goal

My goals for this project are to research multiple approaches and ideas behind how to group students for literacy instruction in a first grade classroom. I am interested in finding research on different ways to group students for reading instruction and how these groups affect learning. I am curious if there is research out there of best practices for grouping students whether it be by ability, mixed ability groups, a specific skill, behavior, or another way I have not learned yet.

I also would like to find best practices for surveying primary students on their thoughts and feelings to find out how small groups are impacting their social and emotional needs during literacy time. I am hoping to find out how students feel about switching groups themselves and how they feel when a peer that was in their group moves to a different group. In my research and through this project I will have more ideas of questions to ask my students to best find how they think and feel about a reading group. My primary purpose for doing this research and creating this curriculum project is to find a good way to provide students the best learning opportunities academically, socially, and emotionally during small group reading times.

Summary

Through my experiences as a strong reader who had some big anxieties over how reading was taught and my experiences as a teacher of reading I am now excited to find the best ways to teach my students reading and meet their social and emotional needs. I have watched students work in small groups and have a hard time when the groups changed and want to know how to best meet my students needs through differentiated learning in small groups as well as taking into account their social and emotional needs and how they are impacted during these times. Through research and this project my professional goal is to learn how to best arrange students in

small groups and how to best get their feedback about how these groups are working for them in a primary classroom setting.

Throughout the rest of this capstone you will learn more about my research and project. Chapter Two is the review of the research literature for this project. My review included exploring the research to identify ideas and best practices when grouping students for small group differentiated reading instruction, how to build and maintain a classroom community and the relevance for this, and how to survey primary students about their thoughts and feelings. While reading Chapter Three, you will get an overview of the method I will use to create this project, an outline for the project, and a timeline for how it will be completed and how the data will be shared. Chapter Four will share the lessons and resources to complete the project. Finally, in Chapter Five I will share my reflection about this project and research and conclude this capstone.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Research Literature

Introduction

Chapter Two describes the topics I explored in review of the research literature to my capstone question of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? Chapter One discusses my experiences with grouping students and why I want to find better ways to do this to help students grow to their highest potential as a reader. Chapter Two explains the research that supports and is guiding this project.

There are three big topics I researched to address my capstone question. The first one is flexible grouping. In this section there is research describing the more traditional way of grouping students, homogenous groups also known as ability groups. There are also ideas about flexible groupings and how they look and how they help students grow. There are many more ways of flexible grouping than listed in this section. This is just an overview of a few that may work best in a primary classroom and for this project.

The next section of this chapter reviews current research related to social emotional learning. In this section there is research describing social emotional learning and the effects it has on student learning in the classroom. Also included in this section is research about building and maintaining a positive classroom community as this helps students feel a part of the learning community and more willing to take risks socially and academically. These sections provide the reader with an idea of why a big part of my capstone question is focusing on meeting student's social emotional needs in reading.

Lastly in this chapter, there is research about student self-assessment and evaluation and why this is important and how to use these in the classroom. Having ideas of how to use self evaluations in a classroom is vital because I will need to know if students academic, social, and emotional needs are being met through different types of reading groups.

Throughout this chapter there are many examples of research and ideas about flexible grouping, students social emotional needs, and student self-assessment and evaluation. Each of these directly relate to my research question of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? Flexible grouping is one strategy that will help address this research question and complete this project.

Flexible Grouping

When teaching reading in a primary classroom, flexible grouping allows teachers to differentiate instruction in a variety of ways. According to Opitz (1999):

Flexible grouping allows students to work in differently mixed groups depending on the goal of the learning task at hand, then to break apart once the task is completed. When I think of flexible grouping, I picture working with sand castles that the tide will wash away. I think of ability grouping as working with concrete to build permanent foundations meant to withstand change. Most often, as mentioned, ability groups reflect children's overall reading achievement. In contrast, flexible grouping fulfills a variety of purposes, from enabling students to use their strongest modalities and promoting group interaction to the teaching of specific skills. After lessons are learned, the group dissolves. (p. 1)

Like Opitz (1999) Unsworth (1984) also notes how flexible groups are not permanent and they are created, changed, or ended as needed. He says that groups can vary in size anywhere from two students to the whole class depending on what the purpose of the group is. Both Unsworth (1984) and Opitz (1999) define flexible grouping as one way teachers are able to meet the needs of students and distinguish it from homogeneous or ability group. Flexible grouping is one way to group students while ability grouping is another.

Optiz (1998) defines ability grouping as “the placement of students according to similar levels of intelligence or achievement in some skill or subject, either within or among classes or schools” (p. 10). He continues that these groups are most often determined by some form of assessment and that after the assessment, students are grouped by how well they performed. These homogeneous groups are typically below grade level, on grade level, or above grade level. Optiz (1999) discussed how researchers have found that students are grouped into homogeneous groups by their achievement on an assessment instead of their innate abilities because of how difficult these are to determine.

However, Unsworth (1984) notes how when homogeneous ability groups did not change it can mean that lower ability groups spend more time on decoding text and higher ability groups spend more time on comprehension skills related to a text. He also speaks of how teaching changes in ability groups because of behavior and social emotional skills that come with placing students in like ability groups. Unsworth (1984) states:

Perhaps the most important aspect of ability groups is their effect on children’s affective and social development. Summarizing the effects on self-concept, Rosebaum (1980) concluded that in most cases average and low ability students give lower self-evaluations if they are in ability groups. A study by Levenson (1972) showed that, among sixth grade

pupils, low ability groups expressed more negative feelings about reading and toward their group than did high ability group members. (p. 299)

Unsworth (1984) explains the gap remains because the skills provided to students in the higher ability groups can not only improve reading but provide a stronger sense of self as a reader when compared to the students in the lower ability groups. However, Unsworth (1984) and Opitz (1999) also support how flexible grouping can help teachers meet the needs of students.

Different Ways to Implement Flexible Grouping

There are many ways to implement flexible grouping. For this curriculum project I have chosen to focus on four of these; random grouping, interest grouping, social or cooperative grouping, and skill or strategy grouping. My reasoning for selecting to focus on these four is related to the target audience for this project, my first grade students. Each of the four seem to be developmentally appropriate for this age level.

Random grouping. One type of flexible grouping is random grouping students. Opitz (1999), defines random grouping as

creating groups arbitrarily, which you can do in a variety of ways, such as picking names from a hat. Random grouping is good when forming groups of equal size or when you'd like students to get to know one another. (Grouping Options, paragraph 1)

When randomly grouping students you are allowing students of all ability and social skills levels to work together. This give students an opportunity to learn from students who are at a different ability level from them. Opitz (1999) refers to one way to pick these groups is by picking names from a hat. Catapano (2017) described four ideas on how to create random groups: a grouping website or app, colored index cards (each child chooses a card from a pile and groups are

determined by the color of the card), playing cards (pass out playing cards and group students by color, suit, etc), or birthday buddies (group students according to their birthday month).

Interest grouping. Another type of flexible grouping is interest grouping. Opitz (1999) defines this as, “Assign students to a group or have them assign themselves to a group based on interest in a topic, such as a favorite animal. Use this when student interest is the main motivation for learning about a topic” (Grouping Options, paragraph 3). Motivation is important during reading instruction as noted by Bomer (2012) who states that “. . . we can tap into high motivation to read that comes from allowing students to choose texts that interest them” (p. 17). When students are interested in a topic or text they tend to be more engaged in reading and learning. Bomer (1998) states, “When students are engaged in books they really want to read and understand, our lessons about reading as thinking come to life” (p. 17). Interest grouping allows students to spend time looking at texts and learning with students who have the same interest as them which can help them to be more engaged in the text they are focusing on.

Social or cooperative grouping. Social or cooperative grouping of students is another form of flexible grouping. Opitz (1999) states, “Consider grouping students according to specific social skills when they need to function in different roles, such as leaders and followers. Students can learn different roles from one another and work together to complete a group task” (Grouping Options, paragraph 2). Later in Chapter Two you will read more about how student’s social and emotional skills are related to their success in reading and reading groups.

Skill or strategy grouping. One more type of flexible grouping is grouping students by a skill or strategy. Opitz (1999) defines this type of grouping as, “Group together students who need help with a particular skill or strategy, such as using context clues” (Grouping Options, paragraph 6). This is different than ability grouping because it is focusing on one skill, for

example a strategy to use when you get to a hard word, and then when students understand this specific skill the group dissolves. Each of these types of flexible groups can have a positive impact on a student's reading growth. Understanding different ways to create flexible groups for young children the next section will describe research that supports how this strategy can help readers grow.

How Flexible Grouping Helps Readers Grow

Flexible grouping is one way to encourage all students to learn and grow as a reader.

Optiz (1998) quotes first grade teacher Susan Anderson in saying:

When you have children ranging from mildly mentally handicapped to gifted in one room, it is important for each child to feel as much ownership of the material as possible.

When a beginning reader holds, tracks, and reads the same material as a more experienced reader, the message is powerful. We don't all learn to read at the same pace, but there are many reading experiences from which we can share and learn. Using flexible grouping enables everyone to feel empowered. (p. 13)

In her quote listed above, Susan Anderson describes how flexible grouping gave each child in her classroom the ability to succeed and feel empowered. Another way that flexible reading groups help readers grow is by allowing all students, regardless of their ability, the opportunity to do high level thinking because it is giving the classroom teacher another opportunity to differentiate instruction. Unsworth (1984) states, "Under these conditions (flexible grouping), all pupils, regardless of their stage of reading development, are able to participate equally in group reading tasks of high cognitive demand" (p. 303).

There are many ways to group students for reading instruction. Ability grouping allows students to work with peers who have a similar ability level. Flexible grouping allows students

to work with multiple students of all ability levels while learning to read. As previously stated by teacher Susan Anderson (as cited in Optiz, 1998) allowing students to look at and read the same text as a student with a different ability level empowers a child. In the next section you will learn about how students social emotional skills and needs have an impact on their reading ability.

Student Social Emotional Needs

For me a primary goal of education is about creating well rounded humans who are ready to contribute to society. My research question of, how can I integrate flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times, is directly related to my goal of finding more ways to better serve students emotional needs in the classroom which will help students be well rounded individuals. According to Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) there are many social and emotional characteristics that schools need to focus on to help students succeed in school and life. They also write about how students do not learn alone, but with the help and collaboration of their families, other students, and their teachers. The next section will define social emotional learning and classroom communities and research to support their positive impact on learning.

Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning has a great impact on students in schools. Zins, et al. (2004) defines it as, “Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors” (p. 4). Social emotional learning can have a impact on a child’s overall academic development. Payton, et al. (2008) shared findings from three scientific reviews about the impact of social emotional

learning on students. One overall generalization they shared was, “SEL programs improved students' social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, positive social behavior, and academic performance; they also reduced students' conduct problems and emotional distress” (p. 4). According to this study, when social emotional learning is happening, students are more equipped and able to succeed in school. These skills are important for students to learn and to help them be aware of themselves and others.

Zins, et al. (2004) also discuss the need for social emotional education to help children be aware of themselves and others, their emotions, the need to know how to make decisions about a situation and feeling, and the need to know how to be ethical and respectful of others. To be able to do all of these, students need these skills: “self - awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship management” (p. 7). These authors continue that when a child has the skills and attitudes listed above they know how to set goals and believe they can achieve them. Zins, et al. (2004) identify three additional benefits when student develop these skills and attitudes. One, students tend to feel more motivated to succeed. Two, students have the skill set to be able to communicate with their teacher about areas of struggle or success. Three, students know how to work towards their goals and overcome challenges and obstacles that may get in their way. Having this skill set can help students be more successful in school.

When social emotional learning is happening students are given the skills to help them reach their highest potential in school. According to Zins, et al. (2004) there are many successes in school when social emotional learning is happening. The authors describe the following nine successes that can result when there is a focus on social emotional learning. One, a stronger sense of community in the school. Two, more academic motivation from the students. Three,

students have more of a positive attitude towards school. Four, students are more likely to work out their own way of learning. Five, there is more classroom participation. Six, higher student engagement is observed. Seven, there is higher performance in language arts, math, and social studies. Eight, more progress in phonological awareness. Nine, better problem solving and planning skill.

These are only a few of the many listed successes at school when students are given the skills to help them understand and use their social and emotional skills effectively and appropriately. Social emotional learning is important to a student's success in school. To create a space for students to be able to learn socially, emotionally, and academically means a teacher is building a strong classroom community.

Classroom Community

When a successful classroom community is built students feel safe, comfortable, and are more willing to take risks. Denton and Kriete (2000) discuss many ways to set expectations and build a classroom community starting right at the beginning of the school year. Building this community in large and small groups takes time, effort, and vigilance by the classroom teacher. Having a strong community helps students be able to grow socially and emotionally as well. When all of this is in place a child usually feels safe and is more willing and able to take risks in their learning. This section will inform about ways to build and maintain a classroom community and how that helps a child grow as a learner.

Opitz (1998) defines community as “A place where students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. They experience a sense of being valued and respected; the children matter to one another and to the teacher” (p. 13). Opitz also says, “As it [referring to community] relates to reading, then, children have the opportunities to share like reading

experiences and, as a result, feel connected to one another” (1998, p. 13). As a classroom teacher the take away from Optiz’s (1998) research is that building a classroom community allows students to be connected and feel comfortable sharing their experiences and learning with each other.

Like Optiz (1998) the Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. (2011) also advocates a teaching philosophy and technique called Responsive Classroom. This style of teaching is about building a community and setting expectations with students to make a school year successful. When talking about community they state

Another underlying belief is that academic learning happens best within a positive social context; therefore, in the Responsive Classroom approach much attention is paid to helping children develop positive social skills. We also value responsible community membership and strive to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the community. (p. 2)

This method of building a community focuses on helping build a positive social environment so all students can feel a part of the community and participate in the community. The Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. (2011) describes how there are seven guiding principles in the Responsive Classroom approach to help build and maintain a positive classroom community.

One, the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum. Two, how children learn is as important as what they learn: process and content go hand in hand. Three, the greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. Four, to be successful academically and socially, children need to learn and practice specific social skills. Five particularly important skills are cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Five, knowing the children we teach - individually, culturally,

and developmentally - is as important as knowing the content we teach. Six, knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Seven, how we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: lasting change begins with the adult community. (p. 3)

Using these strategies and techniques help to build a community in a classroom and school which helps students to achieve their highest potential academically, socially, and emotionally. This process occurs all year with a heavy emphasis at the beginning of each school year.

The Responsive Classroom method (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2011) of building community puts a heavy emphasis on the first six weeks of school to create and build this positive social environment and classroom community. As a part of the Responsive Classroom approach, their book, *The First Six Weeks of School* by Denton and Kriete (2000) lay out the goals that need to be accomplished to get a classroom community built and up and running. Some of the goals for the first six weeks are: setting hopes and dreams for the year, creating classroom rules and expectations, exploring and discussing how to use supplies and other classroom materials, and how to treat each other. All of these, and more, are surrounded around four broad aims or intentions. These are:

1. Create a climate and tone of warmth and safety.
2. Teach the schedule and routines of the school day and our expectations for behavior in each of them.
3. Introduce students to the physical environment and materials of the classroom and the school, and teach students how to use and care for them.
4. Establish expectations about ways we will learn together in the year ahead. (Denton & Kriete, 2000, pp. 3-4).

The four intentions and aims are embedded throughout the Responsive Classroom methods of having a positive classroom community.

Denton and Kriete (2000) also note, “Establishing a friendly, predictable, and orderly classroom is a prerequisite for children’s academic achievement. When children are anxious, unruly, and out of control, the learning that occurs is seldom what we intend” (p. 6). Providing this for students gives them a chance to focus on their learning because they feel safe and cared for in the classroom community. Denton and Kriete (2000) also note that, “Some students will acquire a high degree of autonomy relatively quickly; others will struggle and need support all year long” (p. 3). According to the authors “Autonomy in a school setting means governing oneself with an awareness of the needs of the community” (p. 3). While building a classroom community has a strong focus in the first six weeks of school it is something that needs to be worked on and maintained throughout the school year to help all students be successful academically, socially, and emotionally. In this ongoing work of building a classroom community a teacher must take into consideration a student’s need for a sense of respect and safety.

Sanchez (2008) talks about how when there is a sense of community in a classroom, students associate learning together with care and respect. She also talks about how important relating to students as individuals is for students to feel a part of the community, especially when wanting to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy (p. 53). Sanchez also shares many strategies to create and maintain a classroom community in an elementary school classroom. Some of the strategies Sanchez (2008) describes are:

Reveal your own emotions. “Call attention to your own wide range of emotions. When feeling angry or disappointed, talk about those feelings and describe how you deal with emotions” (pp. 53-54).

Be an attentive listener and teach students to listen to one another. Model listening to students and explicitly teach students how to listen and respond to each other.

Celebrate, honor, and respect student differences.

“Discuss differences and explore how individual differences impact the classroom and the larger community. Sometimes we don’t confront diversity in our classrooms. Over time, students may get the impression that talking about differences is taboo. Eventually, silence may exacerbate fear and stereotypes about people who are different” (p. 54).

Talk privately with students who need redirection. Avoid publicly pointing out a student’s misbehavior, talk to that student individually and about using negative language.

Collectively write a list of goals, rules, and norms for the classroom community.

Have the students help write hopes and dreams and rules for the classroom community and themselves to help them feel ownership in this space. Use these when planning lessons and setting up the space in the room.

Hold class meetings to discuss important issues. Have the class work together to work through class issues instead of just the teacher telling the class how the problem is going to be solved. Use these meetings throughout the year as needed.

This is just a short list of the nineteen ideas Sanchez (2008) provides for having a successful community in a classroom. Each of these strategies that Sanchez provides gives students the opportunity to feel ownership and valued in the classroom. Allowing space for students to feel

valued and ownership in a classroom helps to build and maintain a sense of community which can help students be more successful throughout the year.

As with any teaching method, building a community in a classroom takes time and there are many strategies. This section described just a few ideas of how to build and maintain a positive, safe, and student centered community in a classroom. Having a strong community in a classroom can help students better be able to learn and grow to their best potential in a classroom. One way for teachers to know how a student is feeling in a community is through student reflections and self-assessments.

Student Self Evaluation and Assessment

In the previous sections flexible grouping, social emotional learning, and community building were all discussed. There are many ways to incorporate each of these into a classroom. My research question of: how can I integrate flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? is looking at ways to bring all of these aspects into the classroom. To ensure that I am meeting all of my students needs academically, socially, and emotionally, it is important to provide ways for students to check their own learning and be able to give feedback on all aspects of learning and growing in our classroom community.

This section will summarize what key ideas research shows about why to have students do evaluations or self-assessments about themselves, the classroom, the teaching, and what they are learning. Also, different ways to provide evaluations for students to give feedback.

Importance of Self-Evaluation and Assessment

McMillan and Hearn (2009) defines self-assessment as

A process by which students 1) monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and 2) identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills. That is, self-assessment occurs when students judge their own work to improve performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance. (p. 40)

self-assessments can be done on a certain topic, social skill, or behavior in the classroom.

Giving students the opportunity to self assess and give feedback is a way to help them feel their voice and opinions are important in a classroom community.

Earlier in this chapter classroom communities were talked about. One way of giving students ownership in the community is giving them the opportunity to do a self-assessment on how they are doing as a learner. If a student does not feel they are doing their best learning this is an opportunity for the teacher and student to look at the self-assessment and/or student work and make a goal to improve that. If a student feels there is something in the classroom community, instruction, or something else that is stopping them from learning a self-assessment is one way for them to share that information. Providing students ownership is one way to develop what William (2011) calls self regulation.

William (2011) states, “Self-regulation involves the learner combining his or her cognitive resources with the emotions and actions to carry out the learning goals” (p. 9). William’s speaks of the importance of students being able to self-regulate through self-assessments and their work. He recommends one way to teach self-regulation is by teachers sharing learning goals with students. Sharing learning goals can promote the belief that ability is incremental rather than fixed. William (2011) suggests that when students see learning goals as incremental four things will happen. One, students will be more willing to devote energy to improvement. Two, it will

be more difficult for students to compare themselves with other students in terms of achievement. Three, students will provide feedback that contains a recipe for future action rather than a review of past failures. Four setting learning goals provides more opportunities to transfer executive control of the learning from the teacher to the students to support their development as autonomous learners.

Adding to what Wiliam (2011) states about self regulation, Sackstein (2015) describes another reason self-assessment is important is because it teaches students to reflect. In the following statement, Sackstein (2015), shares how self-assessment teaches students to reflect.

. . . it's easy to recognize that reflection is an important part of the learning process and essential to our overall growth. By developing metacognitive awareness, students can clearly understand and articulate what they know and can do and where they need to ask for help. Being able to identify one's own areas of strength and need is an essential life skill. (Benefits of Reflection, paragraph 4)

Sackstein shares the importance of teaching students how and why reflection is important. While stating that reflection is important for learning Sackstein (2015) also describes how reflection and just thinking about something are different because reflection is intentional.

In addition to reflection being intentional Sackstein (2015) describes seven ideas for how to effectively use reflection in the classroom. One, explicitly teach students what reflection is and allow them to practice it during class time. In addition to practicing reflection Sackstein (2015) also recommends that effective teachers give students feedback on their reflection by pointing out portions of a student's reflection and giving strategies to improve that area or ask probing questions to help students think deeper about something.

Two, teach students to question everything. When using reflection effectively, Sackstein (2015) notes how teachers are helping students understand how reflection engages them in their own thinking and learning process. This also teaches students that learning is an active process and it is not just something that happens to them.

Three, avoid treating reflection as an add-on. Instead of having the reflection be a separate part of a lesson or class, Sackstein (2015) recommends finding a way to weave it into the lesson so students see the connection and they are reflecting right away.

Four, make reflection more about actual learning than about how much students liked the content or learning activity. To make reflection about the learning Sackstein (2015) indicates that the teacher must ensure students have a clear idea of what the expectation for a lesson is, then they are more able to do a reflection of the content at the end.

Five, differentiate how students reflect. Students reflect and think about their learning in many different ways, just like they all have different learning styles. Give students the opportunity to reflect in a way that works for them. Some ideas are: writing it down, face-to-face with a teacher or partner, or reflecting using a video recording or other type of media.

Six, ask students to share their reflections with others. This could be having students keeping a reflection journal and sharing their reflections with classmates in school. Or this could be larger such as sharing their reflection and learning with the outside world through a blog, twitter, or some other media form.

Seven, model reflection. As a teacher, model how you reflect and your thoughts and insights during and after your reflection. Sackstein (2015) describes how effective teachers also model continual growth after the reflection, putting into action what they've learned from the reflection process.

As a teacher, Sackstein's (2015) recommendations provide me with explicit ways of teaching students to self-assess and reflect on lessons, their emotions, and how they are learning. Implementing these strategies in a primary classroom practice will provide students with tools to see where they are successful and where they can use some more help. In my research question of how can I integrate flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times. I am looking for ways to best meet student's social and emotional needs. Using many of the previously mentioned ideas about self-reflection will help me meet the goals for this research project.

Strategies for Having Students Engage in Self-Evaluation

During the review of research literature several authors (Glazer,1994; Black & Wiliam, 1998; and Wiliam,2011) described different ways of having students engage in self-assessment and evaluation. These authors shared different formats for having students complete self-assessments and evaluations. These can be done formally, informally, in a large group, in a small group, or individually. In this section there are only some of the many ideas and ways to have students complete this process. Many of these focus on self-assessments that could be administered in primary grades.

Glazer (1994) shares the idea of having students pose questions about a topic and posting them on the board. Once the teaching about the topic is done have students do a self-assessment on what they learned about this topic and then check in to see what they have learned (p. 100). According to Glazer (1994) this approach allows students to consistently see the topic or skill they are working on so they know what they are learning. This also gives students an opportunity to do a self-assessment at the end to show themselves and others everything they have learned about this topic.

Black and Wiliam (1998) also offers many ideas to enhance student self-assessment with primary learners, three of which are included in this section. One, have student led conferences. This is an opportunity for students to lead their teachers and/or families through their classroom work and what they have been learning. This gives the student an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned and what they still need to learn about the work they are sharing.

Two, support student self-assessment by giving students rubrics to use so they have an idea of how to reflect and assess themselves. Rubrics list the outcomes expected and shows students how a task will be graded. It is important to explain a rubric to students before expecting them to use and understand it.

Three, use graphic organizers. A graphic organizer can be used as a self-assessment because it helps the student to organize their thinking and helps the teacher to be able to see the student's ideas. These are also a good visual for teachers. If there is an empty space in a graphic organizer then the teacher and student both know that they may need more explanation or teaching in that area.

Like Black and Wiliam (1998), Wiliam (2011) also provides many quick and informal ways for students to do a self-assessment or check in, two of them are listed here. One, is called traffic lights. For this assessment the teacher gives students the objective at the beginning of the lesson. Students could write it in a notebook or the teacher could write it on the board. At the end of the lesson the students could circle the objective in red, yellow, or green. Red means the students feels they do not understand the objective, yellow means they partially understand it, and green means they have it. A faster way of implementing traffic lights, in a primary grade, would be to have students hold up a red, yellow, or green supply (such as a crayon or marker) to show where they are at.

Two, use red and green discs. With this the teacher provides some sort of disc or chip with red on one side and green on the other. Every student starts the lesson off with green. If a student feels they do not understand or are confused they turn it to red. This immediately gives the teacher feedback on whether it is alright to move on or if students need more clarification. This is a way for students to informally do a self-assessment as well.

Each of these ideas provided by Black and Wiliam (1998) and Wiliam (2011) can be used for academic content, social emotional learning, behavior goals, or learning routines in a classroom. This is a short list of the many ideas to formally and informally have students do a self-assessment. Wiliam (2011) also states,

The better learners are able to manage their learning, the more they will be able to learn.

All students can become owners of their own learning, but it is not easy. It's up to the teachers to teach students the skills to take ownership over their learning and to promote self regulation by implementing some of these formative assessment techniques. (p. 10)

This goes with building a classroom community and how expectations need to be taught so students can be successful. Each of these skills and materials will need explicit teaching to be successful. With practice and encouragement, students of all ages can self assess their academic, social, and emotional learning.

Conclusion

Through the review of the research literature I have come to the conclusions that there are many types of flexible groupings, students social emotional learning is an important part of the classroom community, and teaching students to reflect and self-assess will help them be a strong learner in school and life. This review of literature will help guide me in answering the research

question of, how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times?

Each student will strengthen their development of literacy skills from different forms of grouping and for different amounts of time because every student has different needs socially, emotionally, and academically. This capstone project is going to help me find which type of groups are a good fit for each student to help them grow as a reader. To do this, I will need to ensure that our classroom community is built and strong. I will need to take the time to teach students and practice how to treat each other, our supplies, and what the expectations are during our reading group times. Throughout the year this will be monitored and if we need to review or change an expectation we will pause and take the time to do that to ensure our classroom community is strong all year long. If there are issues with switching groups or who is in our group I will need to bring that to a class meeting of how we are going to fix that.

Throughout the year this project takes place, I will need to explicitly teach social emotional skills to my first graders to help them be successful as a learner and as a member of our classroom community. Teaching and using self-reflection and assessment to help me know where students are at in their learning, how they are feeling about the reading group they are in, and how they feel in our classroom community will help the year be successful. Through formal and informal self-assessments I will be able to help students see their own learning and advocate for when they need a change or need more help.

Summary

This review of research literature has given me many ideas and tools to start on my project and answer my research question of how can I integrate flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated

reading instruction times? Now that I have more ideas of flexible grouping and how to implement them, tools to teach and build upon students social emotional needs, and ways to help students reflect and do self-assessment, this project is ready to be created.

In Chapter Three there is an overview of this research project that shows how I will use many of the ideas from the review of research literature. There will be an explanation of Understanding by Design by Wiggins and McTighe (2011) and how this process will be used to create this project. In Chapter Three there is also a timeline of completion of this project and when it will be carried out with students, along with the setting and audience that will be a part of the project.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Overview, Design, and Timeline

Introduction

Chapter Two described the different types of flexible groupings, ways to support student's social and emotional needs through social emotional learning and community building, and ways to have students reflect through self-assessments and evaluations. These all support my research question of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times?

Chapter Three provides an overview of my project. There is also a brief description of the method I will use by Wiggins and McTighe (2011) to help me plan this project. This method of designing a unit is called Understanding by Design. After a description of this process I have shared my rationale for using this method while creating this project. This chapter also includes a timeline for creating the project and for implementing it in the 2018-2019 school year. My goal for sharing my project and my reflection of the project are a part of the timeline as well. At the end of the chapter, there is some information about the setting and audience that will be a part of this research project.

Overview of the Curriculum Development Process

My capstone will develop curriculum that addresses my capstone question how to best use flexible groups during small group reading instruction time to help meet students social emotional needs. The curriculum will be created using the resources and ideas in Chapter Two about building and maintaining a classroom community. The curriculum created for this capstone will be implemented during the 2018-2019 school year. The curriculums

implementation will be aligned with my building this classroom community and continuing to foster that community feeling all year in large and small groups. The curriculum will support me in creating different types of flexible groups to teach students in small groups during reading times in the 2018 - 2019 school year. The curriculum will also include strategies for gauging how students are thinking and feeling about the flexible groups and our community. The curriculum will also describe my plan for teaching the students how to reflect and routinely do self - assessments. The data collected from my students self-assessment will be used to help me adjust the groups to best meet all students academic, social, and emotional needs. The curriculum will be developed using a process that starts with a backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Curriculum Development Model

To complete this project I will be using the process of Understanding by Design (UbD) by Wiggins and McTighe (2011). UbD focuses on a backwards design process that is based off of research in cognitive, psychology neurology, and neuroscience of learning. A backwards design is starting with the end goal and then planning lessons and activities to help students work towards that goal.

When using this design to create a unit, Wiggins and McTighe suggest three stages. Stage 1, identify the desired result such as what knowledge do the students need to gain or what essential question will students be considering. Stage 2, determine acceptable evidence such as asking, what criteria will performance be assessed on? Stage 3, plan learning experiences and instruction accordingly, meaning what lessons and activities will lead to the desired knowledge students will gain or how will this unit be differentiated to meet students needs.

Wiggins and McTighe have found that many teachers are teaching in a way that is only encouraging students to know a skill for a short amount of time, for example until the test. UbD encourages teachers to think about how they can create lessons and activities so students can truly understand and be able to use the knowledge that is being given during a unit or in this case throughout the entire academic year. Wiggins and McTighe share,

UbD is predicated on the idea that long-term achievement gains are more likely when teachers teach for understanding of transferable concepts and processes while giving learners multiple opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful (i.e. authentic) contexts. (p. 4)

In this process of designing a unit and the lessons, it is encouraged to have a goal that will be authentic to students which will hopefully help them to better understand the topic or skill. I am using Wiggins and McTighe's UbD process to help me build this curriculum project instead of one unit. This will assist me in teaching students how to recognize their peer's successes and their own throughout small group reading times. Another goal of this curriculum project is to give students the tools to complete self-reflections while reading throughout the academic year.

Rationale for using Understanding by Design

I chose to use Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) because starting with the ending goal and working in a backwards process will help me to better prepare the curriculum and answer my research question. I will look at my end goal of having first graders be able to self-assess how a flexible group is working for them and making them feel, and create a curriculum that helps me teach students skills to work toward this goal. Having this as my ultimate goal, I will then look at the lessons and resources I will need to find and create to accomplish this goal. The entire time I am planning lessons and activities for this

curriculum I will look at ways to make them authentic to my learners to follow Wiggins and McTighe's (2011) concept of helping to make this a long-term achievement and not just something students retain for a short amount of time.

In the next section there is an outline of lessons that need to be created for this curriculum. There is also a timeline of when this curriculum will be complete as well as a timeline of how this project will be implemented in my classroom next year.

Timeline

My goal is to have this entire curriculum ready to start off the 2018-2019 school year. I will make this happen by collecting a library of samples and ideas of how to have first grade students do self-assessments. I will build this library through conversations with other primary teachers, internet resources, and articles and books that provide templates of how to have first graders self-assess. I will then create a curriculum that includes the following:

- lesson plans on how to build a classroom community starting right away at the beginning of the year.
- lesson plans on how to teach students how to reflect and self-assess their thoughts and feelings.
- a list of flexible groupings to try and how to implement them in a first grade classroom. Keeping in mind that many first graders thrive from routine, I will be using student's self - evaluations on groups and also be reflecting myself on how groups are going and are students are adjusting to the groups being flexible. Every type of flexible grouping will not work in every classroom, for every teacher, or for each child. Once I get to know my students I will be better able to decide which types of flexible grouping may be best to try with them. This may

change each year as each group of students and their academic and social needs are different.

Once I have all of this information I will be able to create the curriculum using Wiggins and McTighe's(2011) Understanding by Design process. The curriculum will be written by the middle of July ready to be implemented right at the beginning of the school year with community building and teaching students how to reflect and self-assess. Small group reading instruction usually gets started about six to ten weeks into the school year or once students are independent enough to work successfully while the teacher is working with a small group. This is something I will be able to determine once I meet and get to know this class.

Once students have built up their stamina to work independently, I will be able to implement different types of flexible groups and give students the opportunity to self-assess how each type of group worked for them. Using the data from the self-assessments and from the academic learning I will be able to determine if students need to switch groups or stay with the same groups. This process will most likely continue through the entire school year as students social, emotional, and academic needs change and grow throughout the year. At the end of the school year I will reflect on what the successes were and what parts of this project need to be adjusted so I can continue to build upon this process every year.

Setting and Audience

The intended setting for this curriculum is my first grade class in my current school in the fall of the 2018-2019 school year. I will not know the make up of my class until the fall of 2018 when I get my class list and school starts. The school where the curriculum will be implemented is in a city of about 30,000 people. This school has about 400 students and due to being in an

area where oil is prominent, this is a very transient school meaning students are constantly moving in and out.

This school is a Title I school which provides funds for many paras to assist the teaching staff. Overall there is a staff of about seventy adults. As of March 2018 this school's breakdown of students by race is: 4% of students are American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% of students are Asian, 8% of students are African American, 1% of students are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 18% of students are Hispanic or Latino, and 66% of students are white. Other breakdowns of students in the building as of March 2018 are: 43% of students receive free or reduced lunch, 14% of students qualify for special education services, and 42% of students are English Language Learners (ELL).

Once the curriculum is created I intend to share this information with other primary teachers in the building I work in and possibly across the district. I plan to do a small professional development to share the resources and lessons with other teachers. During this, I will also share my plan of implementing each step of this project and how it was used with my first graders. I will then share with my colleagues about my learning along the way and what changes might be made moving forward in the future of using flexible grouping and self-assessment to help my students grow as readers and in their social skills. My goal by doing this professional development time with other teachers is that I will give them tools to try different ways of flexible grouping and self-assessing during reading groups in their classrooms. Once I have used and reflected on this curriculum, I will meet with my administrator and ask what they will allow for timing of the professional development (during contract hours or outside of that time and whole staff meeting or staff choice for attending).

Limitations of the Curriculum Design Process

As with all curriculums, this curriculum project has limitations related to the development process and the future implementation process. Two limitations of the development process was the lack of pilot testing any of the strategies with real students and not having extension peer feedback as the curriculum was being developed. As a result of these limitations I will incorporate time to reflect before, during, and after using this curriculum to help me continually adapt and make necessary changes.

One limitation that I foresee during the implementation phase is being the only one on my team implementing it. Doing the implementation on my own does not allow me to collaborate with peers about how it is going and/or changes that need to be made. Having peers who are using the same curriculum at the same time to reflect and collaborate with helps to make everyone's teaching of a curriculum stronger. Although I will not have peers who are teaching this curriculum at the same time, I will still seek out advice on areas that are a struggle along the way and see if they have ideas to help improve it for the future.

Another limitation is that it will not be implemented until after this capstone project is complete. In my experience as an educator, every time I teach something it gets better because I have learned what works and what needs changing. This curriculum has not yet been tested with students and therefore there I have not had the opportunity to see what parts need to be adapted once tried with students. This is something that will be done once the curriculum is used, but will not be changed for this capstone paper. A final limitation is like all curriculums, this will change and grow as a result of using it with students to ensure that students academic and social emotional needs are being met, so it will be in a constant state of change.

Summary

Throughout Chapter Three there was information about how UbD is used to design a unit. I also shared why I chose this method to help me design this project. The timeline of when the project will be created, implemented, and shared is shared in this chapter as well. Lastly, there is information about the setting and the audience that will be used throughout the project and how some of this information is already given and some will be unknown until I get to know my class. All of this information helps to outline my research project of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times?

In Chapter Four you will see all of the resources and lesson plans that go with this project. This chapter will give you a detailed description of how I intend to build a community in a first grade classroom, the lessons I create on how to teach students how to reflect and self-assess, and how I plan to implement flexible reading groups. Chapter four will show how my research question of, how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? is answered through this project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Description of the Curriculum Design Process and Final Product

Introduction

In Chapter Three, Understanding by Design by Wiggins and McTighe (2011) was introduced as a process that will be used to design this curriculum project that answers the research question how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? Using this backwards design process helped me to create this curriculum with the goal of supporting my students in achieving success in their first grade small reading groups. Chapter Four includes the curriculum created along with lessons that demonstrate how students will work collaboratively to build expectations of a reading group, learn how to give and receive compliments, learn how to self reflect, and use all of these to help them grow as a reader. All of this together gives a sequence of lessons that answers the research question of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times.

Understand by Design Plan

For me the three-stage template of Wiggins and McTighe (2011) made the most sense while writing this curriculum project. This uses the same basic ideas and guiding questions from the larger UbD framework, just breaks it down into three simple steps. There are three stages, each with a guiding question, that were used to create this curriculum project. These are listed in the Figure 1 with goals for each stage of this curriculum project.

Stage 1 - Desired Results
What should students learn as a result of this unit? If the desired end result is for learners to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be able to express their thoughts and feelings on whether a small reading group helped them grow as a reader. (self - assessment)

Stage 2 - Evidence
What evidence will show that students have met the Stage 1 goals? then you need evidence of the learners' ability to ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence that will be collected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student data in reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NWEA MAP test score to use as goal setting for the students are readers (goal setting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record student's fall scores so when they take the winter NWEA MAP test they can see if they have met their goal ■ Running Records - evidence to document growth as a reader ● Student results of from formal and informal formative assessment check-ins about thoughts and feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal → thumbs up/thumbs down, Check off sheet, write students response at the end of each lesson, teacher observations ○ Formal → self evaluation form filled out by the students

Stage 3 - Learning Plan
What key learning events will help students reach the goals and be successful on the assessments? then the learning events need to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once students are ready to be independent during work time, start reading small groups ● 1st few lessons - R.C go slow to go fast, different types of flexible groups so students get used to being with other students at the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expectations of small group table - created together ○ What is a compliment, how to give and receive one ○ Teach what is self-reflection ○ Practice self reflection ○ Practice reflecting on how groups are helping students grow as a reader ● Students will be able to be able to give and receive a compliment in a small reading

- group
- Students will be able to grow as a reader in flexible reading groups
 - They will show this growth through self-reflection and assessment data

Figure 1. Three stage plan for the lessons.

The overall goal of this project is that students will be able to express their thoughts and feelings on whether a small reading group helped them grow as a reader. They will do this through self-assessment and reflection both formally and informally. Students will also look at their fall Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data and with teacher support set a reading goal for the fall. Throughout these lessons students will be self reflecting on whether a reading group is helping them grow as a reader and get closer to their goal. This curriculum project is broken down into steps to help students work towards their goals as a reader, be able to self reflect on whether a group is helping them grow as a reader, and encourage others to work towards their goals by noticing and complimenting other student's hard work and growth. Throughout this project there is a theme of community building and support which is one way to help students reach their learning potential, as stated in the literature review in Chapter Two. The importance of building community with students is described next.

Preparing for Small Group Lessons

As stated in Chapter Two, community building is an important aspect in ensuring that students feel comfortable and safe to take risks in their learning. Through my experience as an educator, community building begins the first day of school. In a first grade classroom, students are not usually ready for small group instruction until about the second or third month of school. For many students this is only their second year of school. The community needs to be built, expectations need to be created and practiced, and students need time to learn all of this in order for rigorous learning to occur. In Appendix A there is a brief explanation of steps I have found

successful in building the classroom community using Responsive Classroom techniques (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2011) and *The First Six Weeks of School* (Denton & Kriete, 2000) as resources. There are many ways to set up a classroom community and expectations, these are just ideas of what I have used and found successful.

Along with setting up a classroom community and the expectations, teaching students what is center time and creating expectations for that is necessary before small group learning can occur. The expectation for what students are doing while a teacher is teaching in a small group varies by school, district, and state. This curriculum project can be implemented while students are doing a variety of independent work. For the sake of this project, I will be using literacy focused centers as an example of what students are doing independently while the teacher is teaching these lessons. In Appendix B there is an example of how I set up centers and expectations for this time with students. In my classroom the most success has come with using the Responsive Classroom (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2011) approach of having students build the expectations together, along with Jan Richardson's (2009) teaching routines and procedures of centers method on pages 9-13 of her book *The Next Steps to Guided Reading*. Each of these resources has helped me to build a successful center time and center rotations so that students in my class are able to work independently during their center times. A positive of having my students work independently during center time is that it frees me up to work in a small group with other students.

For the curriculum described in Chapter Four to be effective it is important that the classroom teacher be able to focus on the small group lesson and not be interrupted often by students who are working independently. It is important to remember that these are still young learners and in my experience there are times when I need to step away from the small group to

handle a situation elsewhere in the room. Ideally this happens few and far between. If you are finding that your small group lessons are being interrupted often that means students are not quite ready to be working independently, the expectations need to be reviewed, and/or the centers are too easy or too hard for this group of students. This sometimes happens throughout the year and it is important to stop small group and review center expectations to get students back on track.

One way I have found students are successful in not interrupting a small group is by having a symbol they can do with their hands for certain questions. For example, if a child needs to use the bathroom they give me a sign language b. We practice this often throughout the school year to help students remember they can ask without using their voice. To ask for a drink we come up with a symbol as a class. One year the students pretended they were holding a cup and taking a drink out of it. Having these two symbols eliminates many disruptions during small group time because a child can walk up to the small group table, show the symbol with their hand, and I can shake my head yes or no without stopping teaching. Again, this takes a lot of practice but the students for the most part get this down.

Teaching Objectives

At the beginning of the year I start introducing students to learning objectives and why we use them. We talk about how the objective for a lesson tells us what we are going to learn and how it is just like a goal. We also talk about how at the end of a lesson we reread an objective to see if we accomplished that learning. I read the objectives for students at the beginning and end of each lesson. I also use parenthetical supports in the objectives to help build vocabulary for students, especially students who are English language learners (ELL). Having parenthetical supports in the objective gives students exposure to academic vocabulary and also

breaks it down into a term they might have already heard. One example of parenthetical supports might be: I can read fluently (smoothly). In this example the academic vocabulary is the word fluently. That is a big word that most first graders do not understand unless it is explained to them. Adding the parenthetical support of smoothly, gives students a reference that they will most likely understand and now they can make a connection to. Using these parenthetical supports in the objectives is another way to help increase a child's vocabulary using something that you are already doing in the classroom.

Goal Setting

Using objectives each day is one of the many ways students can be introduced to goals since a learning objective is just like the goal for the lesson. Having students set their own learning goals helps them to have something to work towards and have something to reflect back on and see if they have achieved it. Goals can be large for the entire year, small as in something a student wants to complete today, and everything in between.

To help students hold themselves accountable for doing their best reading I will have them sit down and make a reading goal for the first half of first grade. In the current school I am teaching in we use an assessment called the NWEA MAP assessment. We give this online test in the fall, winter, and spring in reading and math. After the test is finished the classroom teacher gets a continuum that breaks down what skills each student needs to work on. Using this continuum and having a one-on-one conference with students, I will work with each student to set two to three goals they want to get better at as a reader by the time we take the winter NWEA MAP assessment. This will need to be done quickly after the NWEA MAP assessment is given so students can start working on their goal right away, and will probably happen before students are ready for small group instruction.

Throughout the curriculum project there are different forms of self reflection that students will be doing. Having students reflect will help them to think about if a group is helping them grow as a reader. When asking students to think about this, they will be thinking about this goal or goals they have set for themselves and if what they are doing or the group they are in is helping them get closer to that goal. In my small groups I will have a folder for each student with their goal or goals written inside of it. I will also include each child's self reflection forms in their folders. This will help the students and myself remember what their goal is and have a place to store their reflections. When it is time to take the mid year NWEA MAP test, students will look back at their goals and see if they have accomplished them. This folder with some of the reflections from this time will be a helpful resource to use when reflecting about how each student has grown as a reader.

Lessons

Teaching students about goal setting, objectives, and preparing them to be independent during center times are all helping to ensure that small group reading instruction times can be successful. Once all of these expectations are set it is time to get small group expectations established so that this learning time is efficient.

Throughout this next section are summaries of each lesson. Just like in teaching students in a large group, it is important to follow the same philosophy of go slow to go fast. Taking the first few lessons to set up expectations and teach routines for small group lessons will help the harder more academic intense lessons go smoother and be more beneficial. To view the full lesson plan for each lesson refer to Appendix C.

Small Group Lesson 1- Expectations of Small Group Reading Time

In the first lesson the objective is, I can share ideas for rules during small group reading time. Students will be grouped in random groups for this first lesson. The goal is that these random groups will have all abilities of students to help create the goals for this small group learning time. For this lesson the only materials needed are chart paper (one page for each group), and a marker.

During this lesson students will be working together to brainstorm rules and expectations while working in the small groups. It is important to have students help create these rules so they feel ownership with them which will help with maintaining these expectations. Below are some steps on how to complete the first lesson and brainstorm ideas for rules.

1. Read the objective for the lesson for today. Explain to the group that they will do this at the beginning and end of each lesson at this table. Tell the group that an objective is like a goal. We will read the objective at the beginning of a lesson to know what our goal is. Then we will reread the objective at the end of a lesson to see if we met that goal.
2. Create expectations while in a small group reading - give students ownership for these rules. Write the rules on a paper for each group.
 - a. What rules do we need at this table to make sure we are treating each other well and all doing our best?
 - b. Write the rules in a way that states what students should be doing instead of what they should not do. For example, instead of do not give up, use try your best. Instead of do not blurt out, use raise your hand or take turns talking

For this lesson point out to students that at the end of each lesson we will reread the objectives and see if we met them while in this small group. Reread the objective - I can share

ideas for rules during small group reading time. Have students shake their head yes or no if they felt they accomplished this objective while in the small group today as a quick informal reflection students to do right away. This is getting students use to rereading the objective and thinking about if they accomplished that or not. In my experience by starting these reflections right away in the first lesson students will just expect this reflection time at the end.

This same lesson will need to be completed with each small group. Once all of the groups have met and brainstormed a list of rules, meet as a large group to create a final list of rules that everyone agrees on. Write or type the rules on a paper that can be laminated and hung up by the small group table all year long. Once the rules are written, have each student sign it saying they agree to follow these to help everyone do their best work and grow as a reader this year. Also make sure you, the teacher, sign the rules agreeing to follow them and help others follow them as well.

Small Group Lesson 2 - What is a Compliment

Before doing this with small groups, read the book *Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!)* by Julia Cook (2013) as a large group. While reading it as a large group tell students to listen for what people are saying to R. J. (main character) and how he is reacting to them. Also tell students that we will talk more about it next time we meet in small reading groups

In this lesson the objective is - I can share ideas of compliments. Students will be grouped in random groups. The random groups in this lesson need to be different groups of students than they were in the first lesson. Still work to have a mixed ability of students in each group, giving students the opportunity to work with other students. The materials that will be need for this class are the book *Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!)* (Cook,

2013) the compliments starter poster by Shawsome Learning (2012) shown in Appendix D, a marker, and a piece of chart paper with a bubble map on it similar to the example shown as a part of Lesson 2 in Appendix C.

During this lesson students will be learning what a compliment is and will be brainstorming ideas of compliments. The emphasis on teaching how to give and receive compliments is to teach students that sometimes what we do at this table is going to be hard work. We want to encourage each other to always do our best to help us all grow as readers this year. When we give compliments to others to acknowledge we see them working hard and are excited when they do something well! Teaching students that this is important from the start will help to build a community that uplifts each other and a space where students want to work harder because they feel valued and are celebrated. To give students ideas of how to start a compliment there is a compliment starters poster by Shawsome Learning (2012) that can be used as a reference. This can be displayed someone near the small group learning area if there is space, or just brought out during lessons. Below are some steps on how to teach students about compliments, refer back to the book read together as a large group, and how to brainstorm compliment ideas.

1. Teach what a compliment is (saying something nice about what someone else has done or said). Explain that at this table we want to encourage others to do their best reading. We will all make mistakes sometimes, even me. Recognizing the hard work someone has done, or by giving a compliment, will help us encourage each other when we are trying to learn new ways to grow as readers.
2. Show the book, *Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!)* (Cook, 2013) and ask students to tell you what some of the compliments that were given in that book.

3. Make a bubble map of ideas to compliment each other (use the same bubble map for all of the groups, just adding to it for each one).
 - a. Show examples of the compliment starters (Shawsome Learning, 2012 in Appendix D). Read it together and model one example such as Nice work _____ (student name) showing that you remember to bring your book box with you to this table!
 - b. What are some ideas of ways you can compliment each other on hard work or how someone treated you?

Figure 2 is an example of a bubble map.

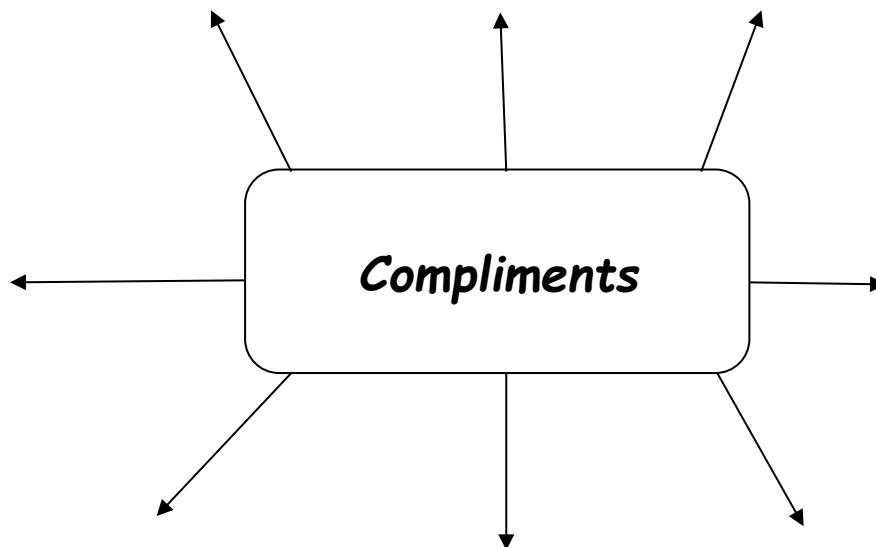


Figure 2. An example of a bubble map used in my classroom

At the end of the lesson students will reflect back on the objective - I can share ideas of compliments. After rereading the objective, engage in formative assessment, by having the students shake their head yes or no if they shared an idea today. Before having students leave the table they will be given the task of listening for compliments they hear from students or teachers throughout the rest of the day. If they hear them they are suppose to share with the class. This lesson also needs to be completed with every group before moving on to Lesson 3.

Small Group Lesson 3 - Tone of Voice and Receiving a Compliment

The objective for Lesson 3 is - I can say 'thank you' in a kind and polite voice when I receive (get) a compliment. Students will be grouped into social skills ability groups for this lesson. When separating students for this lesson think about how social they are in the day. Using the chart shown in Lesson 3 in appendix C, each student's name will be written in a box. Then the students will be split by having a variety of each social ability in each small group. This will give those students who are more outgoing a chance to lead and the students who are more shy a chance to have a peer role model. The materials that will be needed for this lesson are the compliment starters poster (Shawsome Learning, 2012), Checking my Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015), and the book, Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) (Cook, 2013).

This lesson will start by reviewing the bubble map of ideas of compliments created by all of the groups in Lesson 2 and also the compliment starters poster. Then there will be a conversation about how it is polite to say thank you when a compliment is given. Students will also talk about the book, Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) (Cook, 2013) and how R. J. reacted to other's compliments in the beginning and the end of the book. During this lesson there will also be a conversation about tone of voice and how different tones of voice are perceived. Students will have an opportunity to give examples and model different tones of voice to practice which is best for giving and receiving a compliment. At the end of this lesson students will get to hear a model of compliments from the teacher and they will get to practice using a polite tone of voice to say thank you. Below are the steps for teaching students about how to receive a compliment in a polite tone of voice.

1. Review the compliment starters poster and the bubble map of compliment ideas.

2. Teach students that when someone gives you a compliment it is kind to respond by saying thank you.
3. Review the compliments given in the book *Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!)* (Cook, 2013). Ask students to share how R. J. reacted when someone gave him a compliment at the beginning and then at the end. Which seems like a better option?
4. Talk about tone of voice and how that can make a difference in how someone perceives your compliment.
 - a. Model giving a compliment in different tones: grumpy, sassy, mumbling, and kind and polite
 - b. Ask students which one seemed the most sincere
 - c. Then have a student give you a compliment and model saying thank you in all the same voices.
 - d. Ask students which one seemed the most sincere
5. Model giving each child a compliment about their ideas shared or how they are following the expectations of small group learning. Wait for the child to say thank you before moving on to the next learner.

After practicing this have students refer back to the objective - I can say 'thank you' in a kind and polite voice when I receive (get) a compliment. Formative assessment will be done by using the checking my understanding poster and having students give a thumbs up, down, or sideways on how they feel they did with this objective. Next time students will get to give and receive a compliment so they will be encouraged to start thinking about compliments they have heard other people give and that they could possibly give to someone. This lesson needs to be completed with each group before moving on to Lesson 4.

Small Group Lesson 4 - Giving and Receiving a Compliment

The objectives for Lesson 4 are:

- I can give a compliment in a kind and polite voice.
- I can say ‘thank you’ in a kind and polite voice when I receive (get) a compliment.

Students will be grouped in social skills ability groups again for this lesson using the same chart as used for Lesson 3. The only difference will be that the small groups need to be switched up a little bit so students have opportunities to work with and learn from other students. The materials needed for this lesson are the compliment starters poster and the checking my understanding poster.

During this lesson students will review the compliment starters poster, review an appropriate tone of voice to give and receive a compliment, and have an opportunity to give and receive a compliment. This lesson will start by reviewing what a good tone of voice is when giving and receiving a compliment. Students will have a chance to say a compliment in a caring tone of voice and a not so caring tone of voice as a reminder of what a good, caring choice is when giving or receiving a compliment. After this there will be two volunteers who give and receive a compliment. The rest of the students will have the goal of listening to the compliment and how the other student responds then sharing what they noticed about it. After a few opportunities to practice, each student will be paired up with another student to practice giving and receiving a compliment. Some of the steps for this lesson are listed below.

1. Review the compliment starter poster.
2. Ask students to tell you what a caring tone of voice is when giving or receiving a compliment. Using a compliment such as “you are good at sharing,” call on students to

model giving and receiving that compliment in not caring voice choices and caring voice choices.

3. Ask students if there is anyone that would like to try giving a compliment to someone else at the table.

a. After they have given the compliment and the child receiving the compliment says thank you, ask students what they notice about it

i. Some possible responses:

1. I noticed (student's name) used a polite noise level
2. I noticed (student's name) said thank you nicely
3. I noticed (student's name) was looking at (student's name) when giving him/her the compliment

4. Tell the group that everyone will get a turn to give someone else at the table a compliment.

To ensure that everyone has a chance to give and receive a compliment, have students give a compliment to the person sitting to their right. Take turns going around the circle and having students give a compliment to the person next to them. Have other students listen for the voice choice the students use while giving and receiving their compliments.

Once all students have had a chance to give and receive a compliment come back together as a group to review the objectives. Since there are two objectives today, one will be read and then students will use the checking my understanding poster to do a thumbs up, down, or sideways on what they think. Then the second objective will be read and the same reflection process can be used. Remind students to keep listening for compliments throughout the day.

This lesson needs to be completed with each group before moving to Lesson 5 so that all

students have had a chance to practice a compliment once before moving on to more in depth self reflection practice.

Small Group Lesson 5 - What is Self-Reflection

In lesson 5 the objective is - I can practice using tools to help me think about my learning. Students will be grouped in random groups, one possible way is by putting students names on popsicle sticks and picking sticks to sort students into the groups. The only materials needed for this lesson are red and green discs and the Assess Yourself: Student self-assessment sheet (Ms Jolly, 2017) shown in Appendix F.

During this lessons students will learn what it means to self reflect and get a chance to practice. This lesson starts with explaining to students about what self reflection is and why we use it. Students also get introduced to one of the tools that will be used to help self reflect, the red and green discs. Once students are given the discs they will get a chance to practice answering some questions using the red and green discs. Students will sometimes be asked to explain their thinking to help hold them accountable for only making a decision that fits them and not making a decision based on what other people did. Below are the steps that will occur during this lesson.

1. Read the objectives for the day.
2. Explain to students that it is my job to make sure everyone gets what they need to do their best learning. One way that I can do that is by hearing from you and how things are going for you. This is also a way for you to think about how you did as a learner and what you might need to help you continue to grow as a learner. Sometimes I will just ask you to shake your head yes or no. Sometimes we will fill out a paper. There are other ways we might do a self reflection too.

3. Introduce the red and green as something we might use to help us self reflect. Go through each tool and explain how to use it then practice with it.
 - a. red/green discs
 - i. Explain that these will be something used to show that you understand something or you still need more practice. This also might be used while we are reading to show that you are stuck and need some help.
 - ii. Today we will practice using it to show if we have something or if we need more practice. Give each student a red/green disc (you can use red and green popsicle sticks, markers, or crayons, or buy discs that have red on one side and green on the other).
 - iii. List some I can statements that will allow students to use the red and green discs as practice. Start with something that everyone can use a green disc for then work up to statements where there will be a variety of red and green responses. Remind students to only think about themselves and not what the other people at the table are doing.
 - iv. Examples of statements to use:
 1. I can put my shoes on.
 2. I can write my name.
 3. I can count to 10.
 4. I can give a compliment.
 5. I can read some words.
 - v. Every once in a while stop and ask a student to explain their thinking for why they put the red or green disc up. This helps students to really put

some thought into it instead of just doing what a student next to them is doing.

To have the opportunity to use the red and green discs one more time, have students reread the objective with you then show the red or green disc for what they feel is appropriate for them.

Small Group Lesson 6 -Self Reflection Practice

The lesson 6 objective is - I can self reflect on how I gave a compliment. Students will be separated into social groups for this lesson. It is important to ensure that there are students who are strong at giving compliments in each group so there are role models for the students who are still learning this. For this lesson the materials that will be needed are the compliment starters poster and the reflection sheet for lesson 6 found in Appendix G.

Throughout this lesson students will be practicing the skill of giving compliments like they have worked on in the past lessons. Then they will get a chart that has smiley faces on it to practice self reflection. Figure 2 shows the chart with the criteria for each smiley face







	I did a good job	I did an ok job	I did not do this very well
I gave a compliment in a nice polite voice			
I said thank you in a nice polite voice when receiving a compliment			

Figure 3. The chart used with students for lesson 6.

This is the beginning of self reflection and possibly the first time many students have filled out a chart like this so it is important to explain what each smiley face represents for each question. Because this is at the beginning of teaching self reflection it might be something that is done more as a group depending on how students are doing. This will allow me to teach students how to use this form and what the expectations are of it. It will also give students the chance to work through it together with an adult before being expected to do it individually. Below are the steps this lesson is taught.

1. Review from the last lesson what self reflection is and why we use it.
2. Tell students that today they will practice giving a compliment again. Then they will practice filling out a self reflection sheet.
3. Go around the table and have students give a compliment to the person sitting on their left. Remind students to say thank you after they gave a compliment.
4. Once each student has had a turn, give each student a smiley face self reflection sheet shown in Figure 3 and Appendix G. Tell students we will do some kind of self reflection at the end of each time we meet at this table.
5. Explain to students that a smiley face means they feel they did a good job at something, a straight face means you thought you did ok, and a sad face means you think you did not do very well. Tell students to be honest on how they think they did. Walk through each of the two self-assessment steps together and have students circle the smiley face they feel fits them. You might want to put up folder to block students from seeing each other's choices so they do what they feel and not what someone next to them does.

This lesson is all about self reflection. The students will have done a self reflection on how they have given a compliment. It is still important to reference the objective for the lesson

at the end and have students think about if they have met that or not. Since the other reflection part will take a while, this reflection can just be a quick thumbs up, down, or sideways. Students will have a chance to think about whether they actually self reflected on their compliment or not. It is important to keep this step in to keep with the routine of rereading the objective and seeing if they met that or not.

Small Group Lesson 7- Self Reflection Practice with a Poem Day 1

Lesson 7 and Lesson 8 are a two part lesson that connect with each other. For both of these lessons the groups will need to stay the same since lesson 7 continues into lesson 8. Depending on the class, I might do lesson 7 with every group and then do lesson 8 with every group. Or I might do lesson 7 with a group and then meet with that group right away again the next day to do lesson 8 so it is fresh in their minds. How I decide to break up these two part lessons will depend on the class I am working with and how long I think they can go in between the lessons. Some factors that might make my decision of how to break up the lessons are: if the first lesson will happen at the end of the week and the next after the weekend, the maturity level of students and how they can go in between lessons and still retain most of the information, and if I know a student will be absent I might try to get both lessons in before they leave.

In lesson 7 the objective is - I can do my best while reading a poem. The students will be placed in random groups for this lesson. The materials that students will need are An Autumn Greeting poem (The Book Princess, 2015) and the Check for Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015). While I have used this poem in the past and have found it works well with the first graders in the area I teach, I will continuously monitor my students background, demographics, and interests and adjust the poem as needed. If teaching in an area where leaves do not change colors I would maybe choose a different poem that better suits my students and their

surroundings. This lesson can be adapted to be used with any poem. I will also provide poetry folders for my students to keep in the book boxes so they have access to poetry during read to self time. When we are finished with this poem, they will put it in their poetry folder to read as they wish.

This lesson is introducing students to the poem. When introducing a new poem, I always read it first so the students have an opportunity to hear it being read fluently. It is also important to go over any vocabulary or phrases that might be confusing for students. After talking about the vocabulary students will have the opportunity to read the poem multiple times in the group and individually. Below are some steps of how that can look.

1. Review what self reflection is and why we use it. Remind students that this is a way for them to grow as a learner and to show how me how to best help them grow even more.
2. Tell students that today we will practice reading a poem about fall (make sure this is a low risk poem, meaning students will easily be able to read this and/or can catch on to it easily).
3. Read An Autumn Greeting Poem (The Book Princess, 2015) together as a group. After, talk about any words or phrases that are new to students or students are confused by. Some vocabulary practice needed might be: autumn, meadow, and put on your dresses of red and gold.
4. Reread the poem together multiple times (using different voices if you choose). Then have students practice individually. Check in with students who need help.
5. Tell students that next time they meet they will reread the poem and practice giving compliments on each other's work and practice a different type of self reflection.

To reflect on this lesson, students will use the Check for Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015) to see if they have met the objective. In lesson 8 students will have a chance to do a more in depth self reflection since that is the second part of this lesson.

Small Group Lesson 8- Self Reflection Practice with a Poem Day 2

The objectives for lesson 8 are, I can do my best reading and I can reflect on how this group helped me grow as a reader. The groups for this lesson will need to stay the same as lesson 7 since this is a continuation of lesson 7. For this lesson the materials needed are, An Autumn Greeting poem, the compliment starters poster, and the self reflection smiley face chart shown in Appendix H.

During this lesson students will work with the same poem from lesson 7. At first it will be necessary to reread the poem together as a group. After rereading the poem, students will have a chance to read it individually. During this time, the teacher will be listening to each student and taking notes of things students are doing well. The reason for this is after reading then the teacher will model giving each student a compliment on their hard work. Having students point out how it made them feel when someone noticed their hard work will be important in this lesson and moving forward to help students recognize the importance of complimenting each other on hard work to encourage each other to keep going. Below are some steps of how this will look.

1. Tell students that today we will reread An Autumn Greeting poem (The Book Princess, 2015) then practice giving a compliment on our hard work. Reread the poem together as a group. Then give students a few minutes to practice reading the poem individually. Listen to each student while they are reading the poem. Either mentally note or write a

note of something positive each student did while reading. Some examples might be: reading fluently, using some expression, or taking his/her time.

2. Reread the poem together as a group. Then tell students you will model giving each student a compliment on something you saw them do well today. Go around the table and compliment each student on something they did well while reading the poem. Wait for the student to say thank you before moving on to the next student.
3. Ask students how it felt to have someone notice and compliment their hard work. Tell students this is something we will keep doing at this table to help encourage each other to do our best so we can reach our goals and grow as readers!
4. Give students their own copy of *An Autumn Greeting* (The Book Princess, 2015) to put in their poetry folder to read during read to self time.

The self reflection today really focuses on students reading and how the group helped them grow as a reader. There is a smiley face chart in Appendix H that students will get to fill out about their reading today. This is a good opportunity to bring students goals out and remind them what their reading goal is before they answer if this group helped them grow as a reader. Have students think about if what happened in this group is helping them reach their reading goal.

Small Group Lesson 9-More self reflection practice with a Poem Day 1

The objective for lesson 9 is, I can do my best while reading a poem. Like lesson 7 and 8, the next two lesson go together and are broken into two parts. For this lesson students will be split up by skill grouping based on how students are understanding the concept of self reflection. As stated in Chapter Two, flexible grouping allows students to work with students at different ability levels than themselves. In this lesson, the students will be split up depending on how they

are understanding the skill of self reflection. Using the chart shown in Figure 4, students names will be placed in a box then a variety of students from each category will be placed in each small group. This gives students a chance to be a role model if they have this down or see a role model if they are still struggling.

Mostly understanding self reflection	Kind of understanding self reflection	Not really understanding self reflection

Figure 4. Chart to Determine Membership in Small Group

Throughout this lesson and the next, students will be reviewing what self reflection is and why we do it. Students will also be reading a different poem called Five Autumn Leaves (The Book Princess, 2015). Just like the last poem students will be reading together as a group first then having a discussion about vocabulary or phrases that might need a bit of explaining. While reading students will also be encouraged to be listening for ideas and hard work their peers are doing. During this lesson the teacher will be giving compliments to students on their reading and hard work. The steps for this lesson are listed below.

1. Tell students that we will be reading a different poem today and still practicing complimenting each other on our hard work and self reflecting on our learning. Ask students to tell you what self reflection is and why we do it to help remind everyone.
2. Tell students that today will look a little different. We will practice reading the poem and while we are reading we will be listening for hard work other people are doing and will give compliments to others as we hear them doing their best reading.
 - a. As the teacher, model stopping at times to give a student a compliment. Also, make sure every child at the table gets at least one compliment.

4. Hand out the Five Autumn Leaves poem (The Book Princess, 2015) and read it together as a group. Go over any words or phrases that might need some explanation. Some things that might need to be explained are: soon we'll be free, I'll fly into town, and the parenthesis and how the leaves might talk if they could talk.
5. Practice reading the poem as a group a few times, adding voices for how the leaves might be talking. While reading, give compliments to students on things they are doing well at (using expression/voices while reading, trying their best, reading the whole time).
6. Give students an opportunity to practice reading the poem individually. Listen to each student read and give compliments and/or advice while they are reading.

To reflect on this lesson, students will use the Check my Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015) to give a thumbs up, sideways, or down to self reflect on this lesson. They will do a larger reflection during lesson 10 which continues from this lesson.

Small Group Lesson 10 - More self reflection with a Poem Day 2

There are three objectives for lesson 10. They are:

- I can do my best reading of a poem;
- I can give a compliment to my partner; and
- I can self reflect on how this group is helping me grow as a reader.

For this lesson students will stay in the same groups they were in for lesson 9 since this will continue the work from that lesson. Materials that will be needed in this lesson are: The Five Autumn Leaves poem, the Compliment starters poster, the Check My Understanding Poster, and the lesson 10 Self Reflection form in Appendix I.

During this lesson students will continue to work with the same poem as lesson 9. After a quick reread as a group for review, students will be give a partner to read the poem with.

While reading the poem with a partner students will also be practicing giving their partner a compliment and receiving a compliment from their partner. These are the steps for this lesson.

1. As a group reread Five Autumn Leaves (The Book Princess, 2015). Then give students a minute or two to practice reading it by themselves.
2. Give each student at the table a partner. Tell them they are going to read the poem to their partner and listen to their partner read it to them. Tell each student their job will be to give a compliment to their partner after they read. Pick a student next to you to model this with before having students do it with their partner.
3. After modeling, partner students up and have them take turns reading to and listening to their partner. Have each student take turns giving a compliment to the reader after their turn.
4. Once students are finished they can practice reading their poem with their partner to practice fluency (reading smoothly).
5. Have each student put the poem in their poetry folder to read during read to self time.

Students will have an opportunity to reflect on this lesson using a smiley face chart as seen in Appendix I, and by doing an individual self reflection of how they felt they met each objective. It will be important to give students a chance to look at their reading goal before doing the self reflection so they can think about whether this group helped them do their best learning and grow as a reader. Since students are still pretty new at this, it might be helpful to walk through each self reflection chart.

Next Steps in Lessons

At this point in this curriculum the lessons will depend on student needs. The goal moving forward is that students will be working toward their reading goal

determined by their fall assessments and that students will continue to practice self reflection at the end of every lesson. Based off of self reflection, teacher observations, and student growth, if students feel a reading group is not helping them grow as a reader then there should be a discussion between the student and the teacher about why they feel that way and what they think they need to help them grow as a reader.

Self-assessment will be one piece that will be helpful when picking groups and planning lessons. The other part that will be important is analyzing students formal and informal assessments regarding their reading level at this point in the year and determining what skills they need practice with to help them reach their goals. It is important that the students are working towards their specific reading goals and reflecting on their progress. It is also important that the teacher is providing opportunities for the students to learn the skills they need to reach their reading goals. I always like to do self reflection after a lesson to think about how I challenged the students and to decide if anything needs to be changed in what I am teaching.

Since the lessons moving forward will depend on the reading skills that students need, I have not provided an entire set of lessons to use. There is a sample lesson with a focus on the decoding strategy of trying both vowel sounds when getting to a word a student does not know. While working on reading skills, in this case decoding skills, I keep a checkoff sheet where I can take notes of how students are doing and whether they have mastered a skill or need more practice. To continue with the flexible groups, this checklist will help when planning what type of group students need to continue growing. An example of this checklist can be found in Appendix J. Below are more details about the sample lesson on decoding skills.

Small Group Lesson - Decoding Strategies Sample Lesson

In this lesson the objectives are;

- I can try both vowel sounds when I get to a tricky word and
- I can self reflect on how this group is helping me grow as a reader.

When referring to trying both vowel sounds it means that students will attempt the long sound and the short sound of a vowel to help them figure out a word. This is a skill students can use when working on tricks to help them figure out words they do not know and working on decoding skills. Students will be separated into mixed ability groups using the chart pictured below in Figure 5.

Strong decoding skills	Needs a bit of practice with decoding skills	Needs a lot of practice with decoding skills

Figure 5. Teacher Assessment of Student's Decoding Skills

Using the fall assessment data and informal observations in class, students will be put into one of the columns on the chart. Then a variety of students from each column will be put in each small group so there is a mixed ability of students.

For this lesson the materials that are needed are: A vowel chart with long and short vowels, whiteboard, whiteboard marker and eraser, books for students to read individually, and the Check My Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015).

Throughout this lesson students will get a chance to practice trying both the long and the short vowel sound when looking at a word. It will start by practicing each sound using a vowel poster. (This lesson should come after some large group long and short vowel practice has occurred). After that practice, a word such as 'cake' will get written on the whiteboard. Students will get practice saying both the long and short vowel sound for that word and have a discussion about which one makes the most sense and why. This practice will continue with a

few example words on the whiteboard. Then students will be encouraged to try this while they are reading their books individually. While students are reading, the teacher will be listening and giving compliments on students work. Below are more details about this lesson.

1. Show the vowel chart and practice saying the long and short sound for each vowel.
2. Talk about how sometimes vowels follow a pattern with what sound they make and sometimes they do not follow the pattern (I like to call these rule breakers). That is why when we get to a word we do not know we should always use the tricks we have learned to figure it out. Have students tell you tricks they have learned for figuring out a word they do not know.
3. Then write a word on a whiteboard such as cake. Tell students even if they know the word we are still going to practice flipping the vowel sound. As a group, practice saying the word with a long a sound and a short a sound. Ask students which one makes the word complete. Also, point out how flipping the sound gives us a chance to try the other sound in case that would be the correct one.
4. Write another word on the whiteboard such as jump. Have students practice saying the word with a long u sound and a short u sound. Then discuss which one should be used and why.
5. Hand out the books to students and tell them that when they get to a word they do not know to try flipping the vowel sound and seeing if that helps them figure it out.
6. Have students read the story individually with you listening in. If you see a student get stuck on a word encourage them to try flipping the vowel sound. If you hear a student trying this on their own point it out to the group with a compliment!

To reflect on this lesson students will use the Check my Understanding poster (Sam J, 2015) and give a thumbs up, down, or sideways on how they felt they did for each objective. Also, the teacher can take notes on students decoding skills throughout and after the lesson as a reference for future lessons on who has this and who need more practice. This checklist can be found in Appendix J.

Summary

All of the lessons referenced in Chapter Four have enabled me to create a curriculum project that addressed the research question of, how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? Using this research question as a guide, I have designed a curriculum that has flexible grouping to allow students to meet with all their peers in small groups, it also helps to build students social emotional learning skills through community building and self reflection, and all of this while working on helping each child grow as a reader. Having students set and reflect on how they are making progress towards their reading goals will hold themselves and me, the teacher, accountable for their learning. Building a classroom community as a large and small group and building the expectations together will help students feel a sense of ownership throughout the classroom and will help when using the flexible groups. The importance of this is referenced in Chapter Two from Sanchez (2008) who talks about how when there is a sense of community in a classroom, students associate learning together with care and respect. She also talks about how important relating to students as individuals is for students to feel a part of the community, especially when wanting to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy (p. 53). In small groups taking the time to learn about and practice giving and receiving compliments to encourage each other and celebrate our hard work. The most

important part about this curriculum project is that students will learn how to self reflect and do it with each lesson. They will also learn to say whether a small reading group is helping them grow as a reader and get closer to their reading goal. All of these aspects of this curriculum project will build a sense of community in our small groups where we acknowledge each other's hard work, set goals, reflect on how a group is helping us meet our goals, and reflect on how we did.

Throughout Chapter Four each step of the curriculum project is explained. Now that I have completed the project, just like my students, I will reflect on the process and what changes could be made. In Chapter Five I have written a reflection on this process and what my plans are moving forward with this curriculum project.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reflection

Introduction

This capstone curriculum project has been focused on the research question of, how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? This final chapter will reflect on this process and the learning that has happened.

There are six sections in this chapter. First there is a section regarding my biggest learning during the curriculum development process. This explains some of my biggest learnings such as the importance of goal setting, flexible seating, and the importance of social emotional learning. The next section is on the potential impact of this curriculum development project on the larger profession. This section reviews some of the strengths of this curriculum and how they can have a positive impact on the teaching profession. The third section is about limitations of this curriculum that could arise when it is implemented. The next section is about recommendations for future work related to the curriculum development process. In this section there is a description of how I will use future student data and observations to adjust and update this curriculum. I will also continue to research the topics addressed in this curriculum and make changes if needed and to keep myself informed. The next section is a self reflection about this process. This section explains how this capstone curriculum project process was for me and what realizations I made during this process. The final section is a summary of this chapter and of the entire capstone.

Biggest Learning of the Curriculum Development Process

While writing this curriculum project I have noticed how important it is to set and work towards goals with my students. In the 2017 - 2018 school year, the school I was teaching in had us set Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) (2018) goals with our students and during this process I saw how that helped motivate many of them. While writing this curriculum project and teaching, I reflected on how reading the daily objective with my students and then having them reflect on that helps them see that goals can be small and quick or big and take longer. Also, having my students reflect on whether a group is helping them grow as a reader (reflecting on their MAP goals and if they feel they are getting closer to them) is helping students to recognize what they need to grow their reading abilities.

Along with seeing the benefit of goal setting with students throughout this project, it became clear to me how much of an impact flexible grouping can have for students. As stated in Chapter Two, Unsworth (1984) notes how flexible groups are not permanent and they are created, changed, or ended as needed. Giving students the opportunity to read with and learn from students who are at a different ability level than they are and sometimes with students who are working on a similar skill gives students the opportunity to learn from and grow with many peers in the classroom. Changing groups once a skill or lesson is complete will ensure that students get this opportunity to learn from all of their peers.

In the past I have mostly done ability groups for reading lessons and these have been successful at times, but doing this literature review and writing this curriculum project has given me the opportunity and ideas to help students learn in a more flexible setting. In Chapter One I referenced back to when I only used ability groups for small group reading instruction and when students were making fun of other students because of the group they were in. This curriculum

project gives me hope that all students will have the opportunity to see each other for their strengths and to see that everyone has skills and ideas to offer. My goal is that with using flexible groups right away when small groups lessons are used will also get students familiar with switching groups and learning with all students in small groups instead of being use to always being in the same group as certain other students.

While writing the curriculum I have also learned that flexible grouping can be quite difficult to ensure that all students' reading needs are being met. By having students provide feedback on their reading goals and the daily objectives during group time I will have data to evaluate that will help me ensure students reading needs are being met along with their social emotional needs. Throughout using the curriculum I feel it will be essential to check in with student's self reflections and data to ensure I am doing my job as their teacher to help them accomplish their goals as a reader. If data shows me a student or many students are not meeting their goals or being successful I will need to reflect on what is going well and what is not and see where changes can be made to ensure that I am challenging each student to their highest potential.

Throughout my career as an educator I have seen the importance of social emotional learning and the benefits of teaching it. I have also seen students struggle when there is no social emotional learning provided in a school and/or classroom. In the review of research literature in Chapter Two it's stated, "Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors" (p. 4). While reviewing the research on this topic and while writing this curriculum I realized how important it is to explicitly teach some of these skills to students. In using the Responsive Classroom

(Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2011) approach I have been doing some SEL and explicit teaching of the related skills each year while building a classroom community. While writing this curriculum and seeing how it evolved with teaching students learning how to give and receive compliments and teaching them how to self reflect I am encouraged that more time for learning SEL skills will be provided for my students while they are working in small group environment. My long term goal is that having students practice these skills will carry over into other areas of our day. My review of the research literature and what I have learned through writing this curriculum and adding the SEL aspects has re-enforced for me the the importance of providing more time for SEL in my learning environment. As a result I am already looking for more resources and ways to incorporate more social emotional learning into my classroom. The process of researching and engaging in curriculum writing has increased my understanding of this topic and peaked my interest to continue to learn after completing my master's program

Potential Impact of Curriculum Development Project on the Larger Profession

There are a lot of social emotional issues in our world today among adults and children. This curriculum project is largely focused on helping students grow as readers. While doing this students will also work on giving other compliments and learning how to receive a compliment. Students will also work on self reflection and thinking about how they are growing as a reader and whether a group is helping them reach their goals or not. Allocating time and practice for my students to develop these skills in a first grade classroom is designed to help them build their confidence not only as a reader but their confidence as a person.

Another long term goal is that by engaging my students from the first day of school in community building activities and then through these lessons in this curriculum project they will develop a sense of being an important part of the classroom community. As stated in Chapter

Two, Payton, et al. (2008) shared their study findings about when social emotional learning is part of the classroom learning environment, students are more equipped and able to succeed in school. By having students feel they belong in the classroom community, giving them the tools to encourage others, teaching them to self reflect, and other school related social emotional learning, my goal is that students will have skills to help them grow socially and emotionally so then they will be equipped to grow academically as well.

In this curriculum my students will also have the opportunity to not only work with multiple peers in a small reading group, they will also have the opportunity to practice complimenting many peers in these groups. Again my goal is that by providing students opportunities to give and receive a compliment the practice will also enable my students to recognize others hard work. This has the potential to shift the focus from the best always getting recognized by their peers and focusing on students who are trying their best and working hard towards their goals. I think this is something that will carry out into other areas of the classroom and hopefully with the students into other classrooms.

This curriculum has the potential to make a positive change to my teaching because there is a strong focus on community building at the beginning of the lessons. In the lessons that teach about giving and receiving compliments students are continuing to build the community by recognizing the work their peers are doing. As defined in Chapter Two, Opitz (1998) defines a classroom community as “A place where students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. They experience a sense of being valued and respected; the children matter to one another and to the teacher” (p. 13). This curriculum was designed to help students feel cared about and giving them a new tool to show they care about each other. I am excited to implement it and collect formative data to determine the degree to which my intents are being accomplished.

I also will be sharing my curriculum with other teachers at my workplace. In conversations with my peers many of them are seeking and asking for resources and ways to address students social emotional needs in the classroom. This curriculum is one tool I can use along with other teachers to help to give students more opportunities to build their social emotional skills.

Limitations of the Curriculum Development Process

Like all curriculums in a classroom, there are possible limitations that may occur with this curriculum. In Chapter Three there are multiple limitations described that could have an impact on the implementation of this curriculum project. One limitation is the lack of being able to test the ideas and curriculum with students while creating this project to be able to see how students respond to the lessons and activities. Another limitation is that I will be the only person on my team implementing this curriculum the first year and will not have a peer who is also working through it at the same time. One more limitation is that this curriculum project will be completed before implementing it in the classroom so I will not be able to make changes and reflect on the implementation in this capstone paper. As described earlier in Chapter Five the limitation of the struggles of flexible grouping is also addressed. This could also be a factor that affects how these lessons are completed.

One potential limitation that has come up during the creation of this curriculum project that could affect the projected implementation during the 2018-2019 school year is that it coincides with the hire of a new instructional leader. In 2018-2019 the school where I work will have a new principal. There is a possibility that this new principal has a different set of beliefs or values when it comes to teaching reading that could impact my instructional strategy. However, my intent is to share my review of the research literature, what I have learned as a result of

completing my capstone, and ideas for teaching reading with the new principal and ask for permission to move forward with implementation.

There will always be limitations that can affect how a curriculum works. I will be reflecting often while implementing this curriculum and make notes of things that went well and changes that need to be made. Even though this curriculum is written and ready to be implemented, I know there will be things that need to be added or changed along the way to improve and make it the best it can be for students. Having this mindset at the start of implementation will help me be aware of possible limitations and be open to changes that need to be made along the way.

Recommendations for Future Work Related to Curriculum Development Process

I will be implementing this curriculum project in the fall of the 2018 - 2019 school year. I will use the students MAP data and the goals they set in the fall and comparing these to their MAP data in the winter to see how much students have grown as a reader. Since this will be a mid year check in point, my goal is that students will be on track to make one years growth. I will also be doing running records that can show me a quick check in on how they are growing and whether this curriculum project is working or not and to help me adjust and make changes along the way.

Once the winter assessment data is complete, I will sit down and look at it to see where improvements in my teaching and/or this curriculum project need to be made. My goal is to continue with flexible grouping and self reflections even after the winter assessments to continue giving the readers in my classroom multiple opportunities to grow as a reader with all students in the class. Once this winter data has come in and I have reflected with the students on their goals and set new goals and have reflected myself as an educator; I will be able to adjust this

curriculum to make it better for the following school year. The outline from this curriculum will guide me while progressing through the school year with these learners. I will continue to use objectives with each lesson and have students self reflect at the end of each lesson. This will involve creating more in depth self reflection forms as students grow and become more use to self reflection. These will be added to this curriculum for future use with readers.

Since this is a new curriculum and my first time writing a curriculum I plan to implement it myself for the first year. While teaching students the importance of self reflection to help them meet their goals, I will also be self reflecting throughout the lessons on what is going well, what needs to be changed and why, and if there is anything that can be added. During this time I will gladly share ideas and resources with my peers while working through it. After completing this curriculum and adding the first round of changes I would like to hold a small professional development for the staff in my building about what I have learned through the research and writing of this curriculum and through the first year of using this curriculum. The purpose of sharing this is to encourage other teachers to incorporate more ways to use flexible groups and explicitly teach social emotional learning skills to students as a way to help them become more successful in their academics. I also hope that there will be teachers interested in trying this curriculum for their reading small group times.

Throughout this process I reviewed many scholarly sources to learn more about each topic related to this curriculum project. I will continue to research ways to incorporate social emotional learning into the classroom, new ideas in flexible seating, more ways to goal set with students, and newest best practices in teaching students to read. As new research is reviewed I will add to or change parts of this curriculum or possibly write a new curriculum piece that meets

students needs in another way I learn while continuing to keep myself up to date on the research available.

A quote that will stick with me as a reminder to continually better myself as an educator is from King and King (2017) in their book *The Wild Card, 7 Steps to an Educator's Creative Breakthrough*, "If you ever start to feel comfortable, it is a sign you have stopped growing" (p. 175). This is a great reminder that we all continue to learn and grow and I need to continue to do that to always provide the best education and resources for the students in my class.

Self Reflection on Emerging Sense of Self as a Researcher and Scholar

This entire process has challenged me to do things I had never done. Prior to this capstone process, I had never written a research paper of this level and have never written a curriculum. At the beginning of this process I was very nervous and had a lot of self doubt about being able to accomplish this. Working through the review of literature and writing this curriculum project, with the support of many people, I found the confidence to accomplish this capstone curriculum project. Through the knowledge and experience coming into this process and what I have learned through researching and the classes taken I feel confident that this curriculum project has the chance to give learners a different opportunity to grow as a reader and to build their social emotional skills in a first grade classroom. Giving students the opportunity to meet in flexible groups is something that is not common, at least in the school I teach in. As stated before, students will get the chance to learn from peers of all ability and social levels. This will also help grow the classroom community which will benefit students throughout the day.

Personally I have grown as a teacher, a researcher, and a person throughout this process. Thinking back to nine months ago when I was stressed out about how to narrow down my topic

and how I had no faith in myself that this was possible, it makes me laugh a bit. When taking time to stop and think about how much I doubted myself especially at the beginning of this process and occasionally throughout this process, it makes me think about my students and how much this process helped me to relate to them. There are a few people who were super helpful in the actual creation of this capstone curriculum project and there are a few people who did not necessarily help me write this but encouraged me the entire process in other ways. A big part of this capstone project is about meeting students social emotional needs and there were many people throughout that process that did that for me, that is one big reason I was able to keep going.

The review of research in Chapter Two documents the importance of meeting and building students social emotional needs to help them be successful academically. Reflecting back on my journey of writing this capstone it really hit me how valuable this curriculum can be. I wanted to quit and cried multiple times. Often, I was angry, frustrated, and stressed out along the way. This was HARD for me to complete. As stated earlier in this section, I have never done anything like this in my life. The reason I am able to write this reflection today is having had advisors who talked me off the cliff of quitting by pointing out all of the good and positive things I had accomplished in this process so far and then gently giving constructive feedback to help me keep going. Friends and family members would check in with me and ask how things were going or listen to me cry, listen to my frustrations, or help me destress when I was overwhelmed.

Just like my students need me and their peers to pick them up and encourage them when they are having a bad day or things are getting hard, I needed that too and it helped me accomplish something I thought was not possible. This makes me even happier to have found a

way to incorporate social emotional learning into this curriculum not only so students can help each other grow as readers but also to help teach these skills that will help them and the people they know as they grow as individuals.

So how have I grown as a teacher, researcher, and person along this journey? As a teacher having had a recent opportunity to “put myself in my student’s shoes” where I related to their struggles on an academic level. As a researcher I have learned that I am one. I have learned that I am capable of researching a topic and writing about what that research says about a topic. As an overall person I have grown to learn how to better prioritize things that need to get done, appreciate and embrace what knowledge I have and be willing to share it with others, and that I am capable of doing anything. It might not be easy, but if I think it is possible then I can make it happen!

Summary

Throughout this capstone process there is a lot of new learning I have acquired that has brought me to answering the research question of how can I create flexible reading groups to help me better serve the social emotional needs of my students during small group differentiated reading instruction times? I have learned how important it is to set goals with students, use flexible groups, and ensure there is time and many opportunities for social emotional learning. I can see how all of these and this curriculum project can help students become lifelong learners and help encourage each other along the way. There will always be limitations in a curriculum and I have recognized some of these and also that there will need to be adaptations while using this and after completing it the first time. Just like my students will be asked to self reflect, I will be reflecting on how this curriculum is working and what changes need to be made. The biggest part of this process is how much I have grown as a researcher and a teacher. Having the

opportunity to be in the same spot my students are in daily has reminded me that we all have challenges academically and in other areas of life and we all need supporters to help us continue to move forward. That is my job as an educator. With this curriculum project and what I have learned along the journey of creating it, I am excited to implement all of this in my classroom.

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Appendix A

The First Six Weeks of School

Even the best-behaved students do not walk through our doors in September with this autonomy (to function independently without constant adult control or direct supervision). Each year, the details must be intentionally established during the first weeks, bit by specific bit, through definition and constant practice. (Denton and Kriete, 2000, p. 3)

Building a Classroom Community and Expectations

In my experience as a classroom teacher, taking the time at the beginning of the year to get to know each other and build expectations helps give students ownership and feel value in the classroom. These are also things that need to continue throughout the entire school year, but a heavy emphasis at the beginning of the year makes a big difference, in my opinion and experience. Taking the time to create and build this community allows students to feel a part of the classroom community and know what the expectations are. Doing this and setting expectations for center time allows the teacher to be able to pull small groups or individual students and meet their academic and social/emotional needs throughout the school year.

I have found that my main resource for building a classroom community and setting up my classroom expectations comes from Responsive Classroom (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. 2011) and The First Six Weeks of School (Denton and Kriete, 2000). I have also found that using a combination of resources gives me the best tools to have the most success. I follow and use many online resources such as: teacher's blogs, social media sites, Pinterest, Teachers Pay Teacher, and email newsletters. Through all of these resources and ideas I have received from coworkers throughout the years, I adapt and grow this process each year. I truly believe that my core ideas and philosophy about building a classroom community and setting

expectations stays similar each year. With that, I also truly believe that our students and education systems are always changing and I need to continue to adapt to keep students engaged and meet their needs, which is why how I carry out some of these processes change from year to year.

Some of the procedures that I have found stay the same for me each year are outlined in sections below. These are: morning meeting, introducing classroom supplies, writing hopes and dreams, and creating classroom rules. There are a lot of community building and other activities that I include during this first six weeks as well, but I have found changes from year to year and depending on what school I am teaching at. At the end of this appendix there is a list of other resources and ideas I also include or have included in this first six weeks process.

Morning Meeting

Have a class meeting every day. I try to have this right away in the morning, sometimes my schedule does not allow for this so it has to be somewhere else in the day. During a class meeting we always start with a greeting. We practice making eye contact, smiling, and looking at the person. We always greet each other with a greeting (such as good morning, hello, Hola, or what's up) and the person's name. An example might be, Good morning Lilly or What's Up Lilly. After the greeting there is always a sharing time. Sometimes this is a group share and sometimes students share individually. Then there is an activity or game of some sort. There are many ideas of activities on pages 36 through 44 in *Responsive Classroom* (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. 2011). We always end our morning meetings with news and announcements. During this time we read our morning message, look at our schedule for the day, and talk about anything else that the students need to know for that day (maybe a fire drill will occur, there is an assembly, a special visitor is coming, or something else that is not in a typical day). In the

Responsive Classroom book there is an entire section with explicit steps, tips, and ideas on how to set up and run a successful class meeting which I have found helpful.

Introducing Classroom Supplies

Building the expectations of the classroom and supplies is important. One tip I have read in many resources and heard from many peers is assume nothing. The beginning of the year is a good time to keep that in mind. I cannot assume that my students know where to put the supplies in my classroom if I do not teach them. If I am super picky about where something goes I need to teach my students so they know. I spend the first two weeks of school going over every supply we use. We talk about what we notice about a supply, the use for it, how to take care of it, and where to store it. For example, when introducing pencils (which I always do on the first day of school) we first talk about what we notice about a pencil. Some student comments might be, it has a rubber part for the eraser, one side is pointy, or it is yellow. Then we talk about what we use pencils for and I have students come up and model using a pencil. After that we talk about ways to take care of a pencil. Some student ideas might be, use it for writing, do not hit people with it, or do not throw it. I always help guide the students to phrasing our thoughts in what we are going to do with it instead of what we are not going to do with it. Such as, only use it on paper and keep the pencil in your hand or the supply box. Then we talk about storage. I like my pencils stored pointy side down. For this part I show students where our supply boxes are, where the pencil cup in the supply boxes are, and how to put the pencil in the supply box. We then do an activity where we are using pencils and practice putting them away the right way. I repeat this step with each supply we use such as: markers, crayons, colored pencils, glue sticks, whiteboard markers and whiteboards, paints, books, and scissors (scissors is more guided by me since there are more rules to keep them safe). This looks a little different in each classroom as

the expectations will be slightly different in each classroom. That is why it is so important to not assume my students know what my expectations for the supplies are.

Writing Hopes and Dreams

One way to help students set a goal is by creating a hope and dream for the school year. There are a variety of picture books I have used to introduce hopes and dreams, this is something that changes almost yearly. I start this process off by reading a book where the main character has to work really hard to achieve something. We then talk about goals and how a goal is something we will need to work at to achieve. I tell the students that our goals for first grade will be our hopes and dreams for this year. We talk about how this needs to be something that they will achieve at school. I tell them it is good to have a goal of scoring a touchdown in their football game and that can be a hope and dream outside of school. For this hope and dream it needs to be something they can achieve at school this year. I let students pick goals inside my classroom or another class they go to at school such as physical education or music class. I purposely leave this open ended so when we look back at them at the end of the year we can reflect on whether this was a goal they achieved or not. For example, one year I had a student write a hope and dream that they would count to 1,000 by the end of first grade. At the end of the year when we looked back at that he was disappointed that he didn't do that. We had a good conversation about how high he could count by the end of first grade and that we didn't practice counting to 1,000 that year. By the end of the conversation he was proud of how much farther he could count by the end of the year and said he was going to keep practicing until he could count to 1,000. It is important for students to be ok with not reaching their hopes and dreams at the end of the year, but to point out how much they have grown and sometimes it takes us longer to reach a goal than we thought it would. This is a life skill that will carry with students as they set and

reach towards goals in small groups, inside of school, outside of school, and continuing on their entire life.

After I have students create their hopes and dreams, I hang them up in the classroom somewhere they can be displayed all year long. I also have parents write a hope and dream for their child for this school year and hang it up next to their child's hope and dream.

Creating Classroom Rules

After we have created our hopes and dreams I reread each one out loud to the entire class. I then look at the class and ask them what rules do they think we need to help us reach these hopes and dreams. This brings us to creating our classroom rules. Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. (2011) teaches a process on how to create classroom rules together starting on page 84 in their Responsive Classroom book. I have found this process to be very successful in building the classroom rules with my students. This is also processes that slightly changes each year depending on my students. I have had students call out ideas of rules and I write it on chart paper or the SMARTBoard, I put students in groups and have them list ideas of rules, and many combinations of the two ideas. Since this process happens within the first two weeks of school I have to adjust this process depending on the group of students and their ability to do the task on the carpet or in a group. However I end up having students brainstorm rules, we always come together for the next step (which usually happens the next day or later that day). I reread all of the rules students came up with and then I ask them if there are any that are the same or similar that we could put together. This part is usually very guided by me, but in the end I always get the student's ideas and input so it continues to be their rules and not mine. One example I have done is if there are rules such as: no kicking, no hitting, and no punching. I might circle all of these and point out that they all have something to do with our bodies. I then ask the students

how can we put these together and say what we will do with our bodies? Usually there are two to three ideas that come up, and usually one that is along the lines of keep our bodies to ourselves. I always then ask the students if they think this should be a rule, and at least for this one, everyone usually agrees. We continue this process until we have our rules narrowed down to only a few rules that we all agree on.

To hang out classroom rules I either write them on chart paper or type them in a way where they can be easily seen and read. I then have each student and myself sign the rules agreeing we will do our best to follow these this year.

Other Ideas and Resources

- Growth and Fixed Mindset
- Being a bucket filler
 - How Full is Your Bucket? For Kids by: Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer
 - Have You Filled a Bucket Today by: Carol McCloud
- Creating class books for students to look at throughout the school year
 - Ideas: get to know you book, I am a reader book, read a story then each student create their own page for that story, and many more (there are endless suggestions and ideas online and in print resources).
- Have students paint a self portrait and hang on the wall within the first two weeks of school

Appendix B

Literacy Centers

There are many ways to have students be independent while the teacher is working with small groups. In my experience it depends on the district, school, curriculum, and administrator's expectations for what the students are doing during independent work time. I personally have found literacy centers to be the most successful for my students and my teaching style. How centers look change from year to year depending on expectations from administration or if there is a curriculum change, but they always focus on giving students practice on skills we have worked on in a whole group. Sometimes centers change from year to year because student's abilities are different in each class as well. I find that centers also give students the opportunity to work together and another opportunity to learn from or share their knowledge with their peers. This appendix gives a brief idea of what my centers look like and some resources I have used to help me build them.

Setting Up Center Time Expectations

Just like how I set up my classroom expectations, I create these together as a class. We create anchor charts about what centers should look like and sound like, practice being at a center, practice cleaning up from a center, and review expectations often. I model each center when it changes and if there are any specific rules for that center I will add those in then. For example: when we have stamp words I have a specific way the stamps need to be cared for so I model that and also spend some time at that center to help students learn it. Below is a list of ideas of how I personally set up expectations of center time. I am always learning new ways to carry out these ideas and adapt and change them slightly each year depending on that class' needs.

- After the first time of doing centers (or the first week) create an anchor chart that will hang on the wall all year about what center time looks like and sounds like. Some examples students might come up with are:
 - Center time looks like: students working, people talking
 - Center time sounds like: pencils writing, people helping each other
- I use Jan Richardson's First Six Weeks Teaching Routines and Procedures method to set up centers in *The Next Steps to Guided Reading* (2009, pp. 9 - 13). This gives a nice easy detailed way to set up centers in the classroom starting the first week of school. The centers the first few weeks of school are not necessarily academic (Legos or play doh) but they get students use to the expectations of centers right away.
- Create rules of centers together so students feel the ownership just like with classroom rules. I hang these on the wall all year right by the looks like and sounds like poster.
 - Rule ideas might be: Work together, take turns, stay at your center, or share supplies
- Teach expectations of what to do if a student needs help and the teacher is working with a group. I teach my students they can only interrupt the small group if someone is sick or hurt. As stated in Chapter Four, I teach a hand signal for asking to go to the bathroom or to get a drink so students do not need to use their voice. I have found this to be much less disruptive as I can just shake my head yes or no and that student goes and the small group continues learning.
- At first I walk around and help students during center time as needed. I try to not intervene at a center unless students are really stuck or having a hard time working together. I want students to be able to be independent during this learning time and not

expect that I will jump in to help anytime there is a problem. As stated in Chapter Four, once I feel students are independent in their centers, it is time to start pulling small groups. There are times I need to stop small groups to review center expectations, set up a new more in depth center (such as the computers or listening center), or because they are first graders and sometimes they need a grown ups help to work through a problem.

Resources for Literacy Centers

Keeping things exactly the same from year to year has not worked for me or my students. I have found that I can keep some things the same and some things will need to change. Because of this I am always looking for new ideas and resources to improve center time in my classroom. Below are some resources I have used and found to be helpful for Literacy Centers.

- The Next Steps in Guided Reading by Jan Richardson (2009)
- The Daily 5, Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades, by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser (also known as the sisters) (2014).
 - Website with tons of information and resources: <https://www.thedailycafe.com/>
- Words their Way (a series of books published by Pearson) - each book has a different level of word study activities depending on where students are at and what skills they still need to practice
- Online resources where I follow multiple teachers and sites on Pinterest, Teachers pay Teachers, and emails newsletters I have signed up for

Appendix C

Lessons

Stage 1 - Desired Results
What should students learn as a result of this unit? If the desired end result is for learners to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be able to express their thoughts and feelings on whether a small reading group helped them grow as a reader. (self - assessment)
Stage 2 - Evidence
What evidence will show that students have met the Stage 1 goals? then you need evidence of the learners' ability to ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence that will be collected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student data in reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MAP test score to use as goal setting for the students are readers (goal setting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record student's fall scores so when they take the winter MAP test they can see if they have met their goal ■ Running Records - evidence to document growth as a reader ● Student results of from formal and informal formative assessment check-ins about thoughts and feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal → thumbs up/thumbs down, Check off sheet, write students response at the end of each lesson, teacher observations ○ Formal → self evaluation form filled out by the students
Stage 3 - Learning Plan
What key learning events will help students reach the goals and be successful on the assessments? then the learning events need to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once students are ready to be independent during work time, start reading small groups ● 1st few lessons - R.C go slow to go fast, different types of flexible groups so students get used to being with other students at the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expectations of small group table - created together ○ What is a compliment, how to give and receive one ○ Teach what is self-reflection

- Practice self reflection
- Practice reflecting on how groups are helping students grow as a reader
- Students will be able to be able to give and receive a compliment in a small reading group
- Students will be able to grow as a reader in flexible reading groups
 - They will show this growth through self reflection and assessment data

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 1 Expectations of small group reading time</p>
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Objective: I can share ideas for rules during small group reading time.

Grouping of Students: Random grouping

Materials:

Chart paper - one sheet per group

Marker

Lesson:

1. Read the objective for the lesson for today. Explain to the group that they will do this at the beginning and end of each lesson at this table. Tell the group that an objective is like a goal. We will read the objective at the beginning of a lesson to know what our goal is. Then we will reread the objective at the end of a lesson to see if we met that goal.
2. Create expectations while in a small group reading - give students ownership for these rules Write the rules on a paper for each group.
 - a. What rules do we need at this table to make sure we are treating each other well and all doing our best?
 - b. Write the rules in a way that states what students should be doing instead of what they should not do. For example, instead of do not give up, use try your best. Instead of do not blurt out, use raise your hand or take turns talking

Reflection:

Reread the objective to the group. Have students shake their head yes or no if they met that objective for this time at the table.

Repeat this lesson with each group until every student has been a part of making the rules for the table.

Later in a large group create one set of rules the whole class agrees on for when they are at the table for small group reading time.

Type these rules up and have all students and YOU sign them. Laminate and post by the table so they can easily be referenced if needed

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 2 What is a compliment</p>
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Before teaching be sure to read the book, Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) as a whole group.

Objective: I can share ideas of compliments.

Grouping of Students: Random grouping - different random groups from last lesson

Materials:

Chart paper with a bubble map on it (example below)

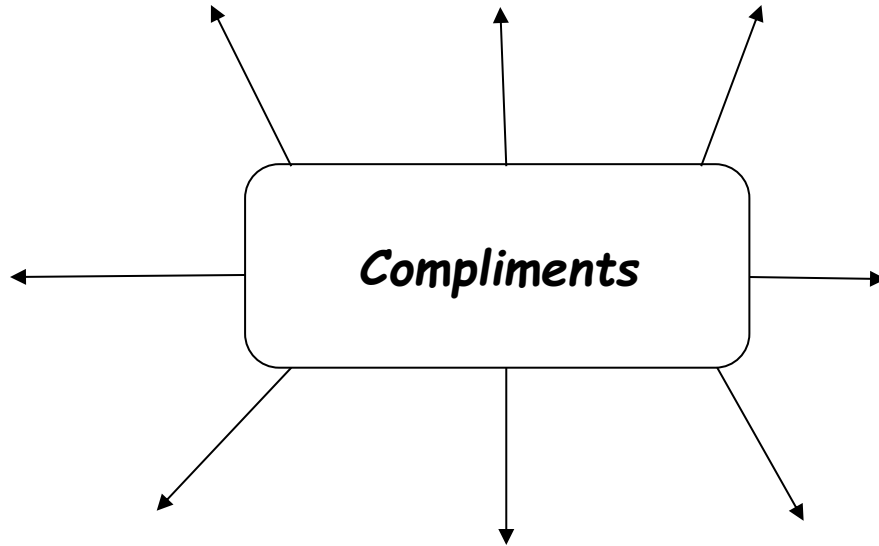
Marker

Compliment starters poster (Shawsome Learning)

Book - Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) by: Julia Cook

Lesson:

1. Review the small group expectations created as a class and where they are hanging by the table
2. Read the objective for today as a group.
3. Teach what a compliment is (saying something nice about what someone else has done or said). Explain that at this table we want to encourage others to do their best reading. We will all make mistakes sometimes, even me. Recognizing the hard work someone has done, or by giving a compliment, will help us encourage each other when we are trying to learn new ways to grow as readers.
4. Show the book, Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) and ask students to tell you what some of the compliments that were given in that book.
5. Make a bubble map of ideas to compliment each other (use the same bubble map for all of the groups, just adding to it for each one).
 - a. Show examples of the compliment starters (TPT example). Read it together and model one example such as Nice work _____ (student name) showing that you remember to bring your book box with you to this table!
 - b. What are some ideas of ways you can compliment each other on hard work or how someone treated you?



Reflection:

Reread the objective statement. After each one have students shake their heads yes or no if they did that at the table today. Tell students to listen for compliments from students and teachers throughout the day and to share with the class if they hear any.

Repeat this lesson with each group before moving on to the next lesson.

<p>Small Group Lesson 3 Tone of voice and receiving a compliment</p>

Objective:

I can say 'thank you' in a kind and polite voice when I receive (get) a compliment.

Grouping of Students: Ability groups - before the lesson, split up the groups for today by writing down students names in three categories (shown below) according to their social skills ability. Then make sure there are a mixture of each social ability in each group.

outgoing	in between	quiet/shy

Materials:

Compliment starters poster (Shawsome Learning)

Checking my understand poster (Sam J)

Book - Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!) by: Julia Cook

Lesson:

1. Review the small group expectations created as a class and where they are hanging by the table
2. Read the objective for today as a group.
3. Review the compliment starters poster and the bubble map of compliment ideas.
4. Teach students that when someone gives you a compliment it is kind to respond by saying thank you.
5. Review the compliments given in the book Thanks for the Feedback, I Think (Best Me I Can Be!). Ask students to share how RJ reacted when someone gave him a compliment at the beginning and then at the end. Which seems like a better option?
6. Talk about tone of voice and how that can make a difference in how someone perceives your compliment.
 - a. Model giving a compliment in different tones: grumpy, sassy, mumbling, and kind and polite
 - b. Ask students which one seemed the most sincere
 - c. Then have a student give you a compliment and model saying thank you in all the same voices.
 - d. Ask students which one seemed the most sincere
6. Model giving each child a compliment about their ideas shared or how they are following the expectations of small group learning. Wait for the child to say thank you before moving on to the next learner.

Reflection:

Reread the objective. Using the checking my understanding poster (Sam J) in Appendix E, have students give a thumbs up if they did that well today and a thumbs sideways if they think they need more work. Remind students to focus on just what they think and not what a friend thinks. Tell students they will practice giving and receiving compliments next time. Have students listen for compliments they hear and think about how they can give a compliment. If time, share some ideas a the table.

Repeat this lesson with each group before moving on to the next lesson.

Small Group Lesson 4
Giving and receiving a compliment

Objective:

I can give a compliment in a kind and polite voice.

I can say ‘thank you’ in a kind and polite voice when I receive (get) a compliment.

Grouping of Students: Ability groups - use the same chart from lesson three to look at student’s social skills ability. Split students up by having a mixture of each ability in every group and having the groups be slightly different than lesson three.

Materials:

Compliment starter poster (Shawsome Learning)

Check my understanding poster (Sam J)

Lesson:

1. Review the small group expectations created as a class and where they are hanging by the table
2. Read the objectives for the lesson.
3. Review the compliment starter poster
4. Ask students to tell you what a caring tone of voice is when giving or receiving a compliment. Using a compliment such as “you are good at sharing,” call on students to model giving and receiving that compliment in not caring voice choices and caring voice choices.
5. Ask students if there is anyone that would like to try giving a compliment to someone else at the table.
 - a. After they have given the compliment and the child receiving the compliment says thank you, ask students what they notice about it
 - i. Some possible responses:
 1. I noticed (student’s name) used a polite noise level
 2. I noticed (student’s name) said thank you nicely
 3. I noticed (student’s name) was looking at (student’s name) when giving him/her the compliment
5. Tell the group that everyone will get a turn to give someone else at the table a compliment. To ensure that everyone has a chance to give and receive a compliment, have students give a compliment to the person sitting to their right. Take turns going around the circle and having students give a compliment to the person next to them. Have other students listen for the voice choice the students use while giving and receiving their compliments.

Reflection:

Reread the objectives individually. Use the checking my understanding poster as a model and have students give a thumbs up, sideways, or down for how they think they did for each objective. Remind students to do what they think and not what someone else is doing.

Repeat this lesson with each group before moving on to the next lesson.

<p>Small Group Lesson 5 What is a self reflection</p>
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Objective:

I can practice using tools to help me think about my learning.

Grouping of Students: Random grouping

Materials:

Red and green discs

Assess Yourself: Student self-assessment sheet (Ms Jolly, 2017)

Lesson:

1. Read the objectives for the day.
2. Explain to students that it is my job to make sure everyone gets what they need to do their best learning. One way that I can do that is by hearing from you and how things are going for you. This is also a way for you to think about how you did as a learner and what you might need to help you continue to grow as a learner. Sometimes I will just ask you to shake your head yes or no. Sometimes we will fill out a paper. There are other ways we might do a self reflection too.
3. Introduce the red and green as something we might use to help us self reflect. Go through each tool and explain how to use it then practice with it.
 - a. red/green discs
 - i. Explain that these will be something used to show that you understand something or you still need more practice. This also might be used while we are reading to show that you are stuck and need some help.
 - ii. Today we will practice using it to show if we have something or if we need more practice. Give each student a red/green disc (you can use red and green popsicle sticks, markers, or crayons, or buy discs that have red on one side and green on the other).
 - iii. List some I can statements that will allow students to use the red and green discs as practice. Start with something that everyone can use a green disc for then work up to statements where there will be a variety of red and green responses. Remind students to only think about themselves and not what the other people at the table are doing.
 - iv. Examples of statements to use:
 1. I can put my shoes on.
 2. I can write my name.
 3. I can count to 10.
 4. I can give a compliment.
 5. I can read some words.
 - v. Every once in a while stop and ask a student to explain their thinking for why they put the red or green disc up. This helps students to really put some thought into it instead of just doing what a student next to them is doing.

Reflection:

Reread the objective together. Have students use the red or green discs to reflect on the objective. Have students explain their thinking for why they put the red or green disc up for this.

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 6 Self Reflection Practice</p>
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Objective:

I can self reflect on how I gave a compliment.

Grouping of Students: Social grouping. Have some students who are strong at giving compliments in each group.

Materials:

Compliment Starters poster

Smiley face self reflection sheet

Lesson:

1. Read the objectives for the day.
2. Review from the last lesson what self reflection is and why we use it.
3. Tell students that today they will practice giving a compliment again. Then they will practice filling out a self reflection sheet.
4. Go around the table and have students give a compliment to the person sitting on their left. Remind students to say thank you after they gave a compliment.
5. Once each student has had a turn, give each student a smiley face self reflection sheet (in google docs). Tell students we will do some kind of self reflection at the end of each time we meet at this table.
6. Explain to students that a smiley face means they feel they did a good job at something, a straight face means you thought you did ok, and a sad face means you think you did not do very well. Tell students to be honest on how they think they did. Walk through each of the two self assessment steps together and have students circle the smiley face they feel fits them. You might want to put up folder to block students from seeing each other's choices so they do what they feel and not what someone next to them does.

Reflection:

Reread the objective. Have students give a thumbs up, down, or sideways to show how they think they did with self reflection today.

Repeat this lesson with each group.

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 7 Self Reflection Practice with a poem day 1</p>
--

Objective:

I can do my best while reading a poem.

Grouping of Students: Random Grouping

Materials:

An Autumn Greeting poem by The Book Princess

Check for Understanding poster (Sam J)

Lesson:

1. Read the objective for today.
2. Review what self reflection is and why we use it. Remind students that this is a way for them to grow as a learner and to show how we can best help them grow even more.
3. Tell students that today we will practice reading a poem about fall (make sure this is a low risk poem, meaning students will easily be able to read this and/or can catch on to it easily).
4. Read An Autumn Greeting Poem (The Book Princess) together as a group. After, talk about any words or phrases that are new to students or students are confused by. Some vocabulary practice needed might be: autumn, meadow, and put on your dresses of red and gold.
5. Reread the poem together multiple times (using different voices if you choose). Then have students practice individually. Check in with students who need help.
6. Tell students that next time they meet they will reread the poem and practice giving compliments on each other's work and practice a different type of self reflection.

Reflection:

Reread the objective. Have students use the Check for Understanding poster to reflect on the objective of, I can do my best while reading a poem.

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 8 Self Reflection Practice with a poem day 2</p>
--

Objective:

I can do my best reading.

I can reflect on how this group helped me grow as a reader.

Grouping of Students: Random grouping - keep the same groups as lesson 7.

Materials:

An Autumn Greeting poem by The Book Princess

Compliment starter poster (Shawsome Learning)

Self Reflection smiley face chart in Appendix H

Lesson:

1. Read the objective for today.
2. Tell students that today we will reread An Autumn Greeting poem then practice giving a compliment on our hard work. Reread the poem together as a group. Then give students a few minutes to practice reading the poem individually. Listen to each student while they are reading the poem. Either mentally note or write a note of something positive each student did while reading. Some examples might be: reading fluently, using some expression, or taking his/her time.
3. Reread the poem together as a group. Then tell students you will model giving each student a compliment on something you saw them do well today. Go around the table and compliment each student on something they did well while reading the poem. Wait for the student to say thank you before moving on to the next student.
4. Ask students how it felt to have someone notice and compliment their hard work. Tell students this is something we will keep doing at this table to help encourage each other to do our best so we can reach our goals and grow as readers!
5. Give students their own copy of An Autumn Greeting to put in their poetry folder to read during read to self time.

Reflection:

- Self reflection sheet - smiley face chart
 - Two sections
 - One - how this group helped them do their best learning and grow as a reader
 - One - I did my best reading today.

Small Group Lesson 9
More self reflection practice with a poem day 1

Objective:

I can do my best reading of a poem.

Grouping of Students: Skill Grouping based on how students are understanding the concept of self reflection. Have a variety of each skill in each small group so there are role models for the students who are still catching on to this skill. The chart below is an example of how you could split students up then make the groups using students from each column in each group.

Mostly understanding self reflection	Kind of understanding self reflection	Not really understanding self reflection

Materials:

Five Autumn Leaves (The Book Princess)

Compliment starters poster (Shawsome Learning)

Check My Understanding Poster (Sam J)

Lesson:

1. Read the objectives for today.
2. Tell students that we will be reading a different poem today and still practicing complimenting each other on our hard work and self reflecting on our learning. Ask students to tell you what self reflection is and why we do it to help remind everyone.
3. Tell students that today will look a little different. We will practice reading the poem and while we are reading we will be listening for hard work other people are doing and will give compliments to others as we hear them doing their best reading.
 - a. As the teacher, model stopping at times to give a student a compliment. Also, make sure every child at the table gets at least one compliment.
4. Hand out the Five Autumn Leaves poem and read it together as a group. Go over any words or phrases that might need some explanation. Some things that might need to be explained are: soon we'll be free, I'll fly into town, and the parenthesis and how the leaves might talk if they could talk.
5. Practice reading the poem as a group a few times, adding voices for how the leaves might be talking. While reading, give compliments to students on things they are doing well at (using expression/voices while reading, trying their best, reading the whole time).
6. Give students an opportunity to practice reading the poem individually. Listen to each student read and give compliments and/or advice while they are reading.

Reflection:

Reread the objective. Have students use the Check My Understanding poster to give a thumbs up, thumbs sideways, or thumbs down on whether they felt they did their best reading today.

<p style="text-align: center;">Small Group Lesson 10 More self reflection with a poem day 2</p>

Objective:

I can do my best reading of a poem.

I can give a compliment to my partner.

I can self reflect on how this group is helping me grow as a reader.

Grouping of Students: Skill grouping, same groups as lesson 9.

Materials:

Five Autumn Leaves (The Book Princess)

Compliment starters poster (Shawsome Learning)

Check My Understanding Poster (Sam J)

Self Reflection form shown in Appendix I

Lesson:

1. Read the objectives for today.
2. As a group reread Five Autumn Leaves. Then give students a minute or two to practice reading it by themselves.
3. Give each student at the table a partner. Tell them they are going to read the poem to their partner and listen to their partner read it to them. Tell each student their job will be to give a compliment to their partner after they read. Pick a student next to you to model this with before having students do it with their partner.
4. After modeling, partner students up and have them take turns reading to and listening to their partner. Have each student take turns giving a compliment to the reader after their turn.
5. Once students are finished they can practice reading their poem with their partner to practice fluency (reading smoothly).
6. Have each student put the poem in their poetry folder to read during read to self time.

Reflection:

Reread the objectives. Have students fill out the self reflection form. Work through each question together and have students circle the smiley face that is true for today.

<p>Small Group Lesson Decoding Strategies Sample Lesson</p>
--

Objective:

I can try both vowel sounds when I get to a tricky word.

I can self reflect on how this group is helping me grow as a reader.

Grouping of Students: Using fall assessments and classroom observations, look at where students are at with skills for decoding words. Put students names in which group they fit best.

Strong decoding skills	Needs a bit of practice with decoding skills	Needs a lot of practice with decoding skills

Then, using this chart separate students into mixed ability groups having some students from each of the above categories in each small group.

Materials:

A vowel chart with long and short vowels

Whiteboard

Whiteboard marker and eraser

Books for students to read individually

Check My Understanding poster (Sam J)

Lesson:

1. Read the objective.
2. Show the vowel chart and practice saying the long and short sound for each vowel.
3. Talk about how sometimes vowels follow a pattern with what sound they make and sometimes they do not follow the pattern (I like to call these rule breakers). That is why when we get to a word we do not know we should always use the tricks we have learned to figure it out. Have students tell you tricks they have learned for figuring out a word they do not know.
4. Then write a word on a whiteboard such as cake. Tell students even if they know the word we are still going to practice flipping the vowel sound. As a group, practice saying the word with a long a sound and a short a sound. Ask students which one makes the word complete. Also, point out how flipping the sound gives us a chance to try the other sound in case that would be the correct one.
5. Write another word on the whiteboard such as jump. Have students practice saying the word with a long u sound and a short u sound. Then discuss which one should be used and why.
6. Hand out the books to students and tell them that when they get to a word they do not know to try flipping the vowel sound and seeing if that helps them figure it out.

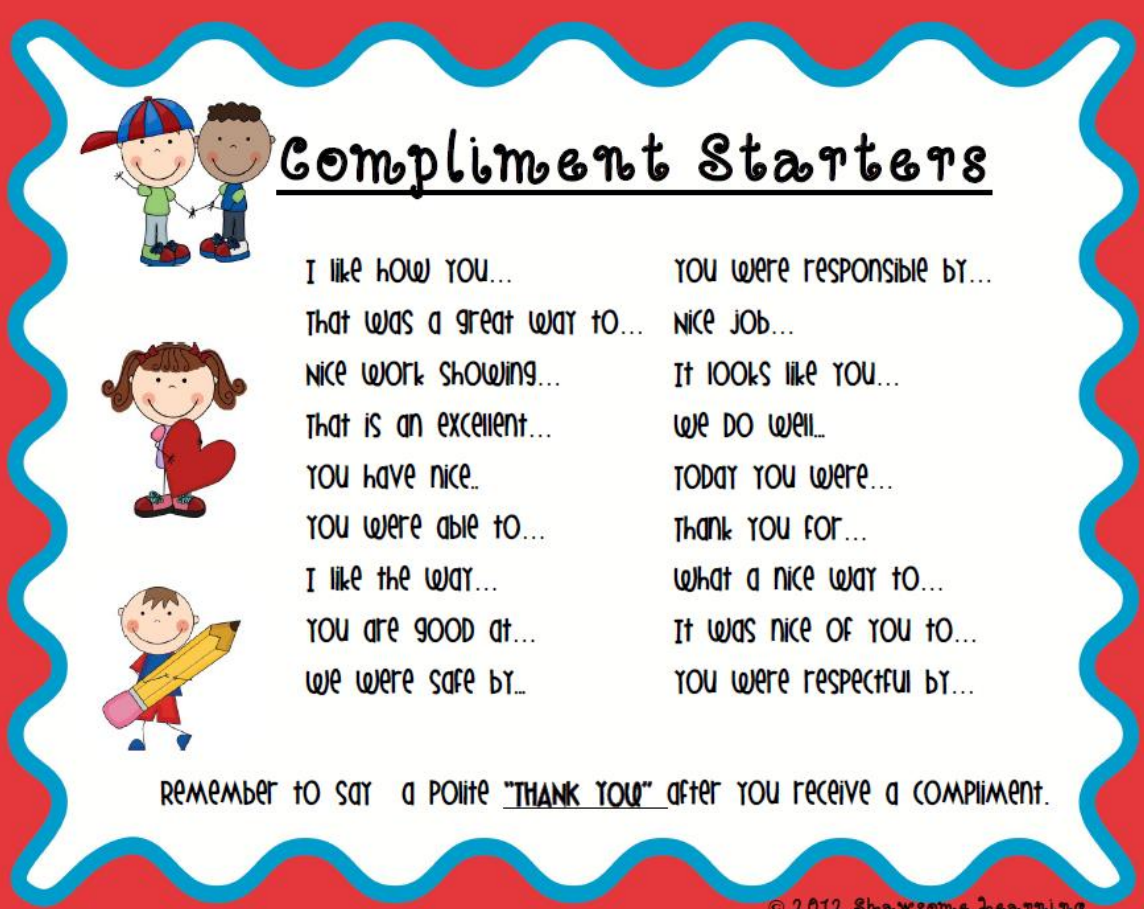
7. Have students read the story individually with you listening in. If you see a student get stuck on a word encourage them to try flipping the vowel sound. If you hear a student trying this on their own point it out to the group with a compliment!

Reflection:


Reread the objectives. Have students use the Check My Understanding poster (Sam J) to give a thumbs up, down, or sideways on each objective.

Appendix D

Compliment Starters Poster



Compliment Starters

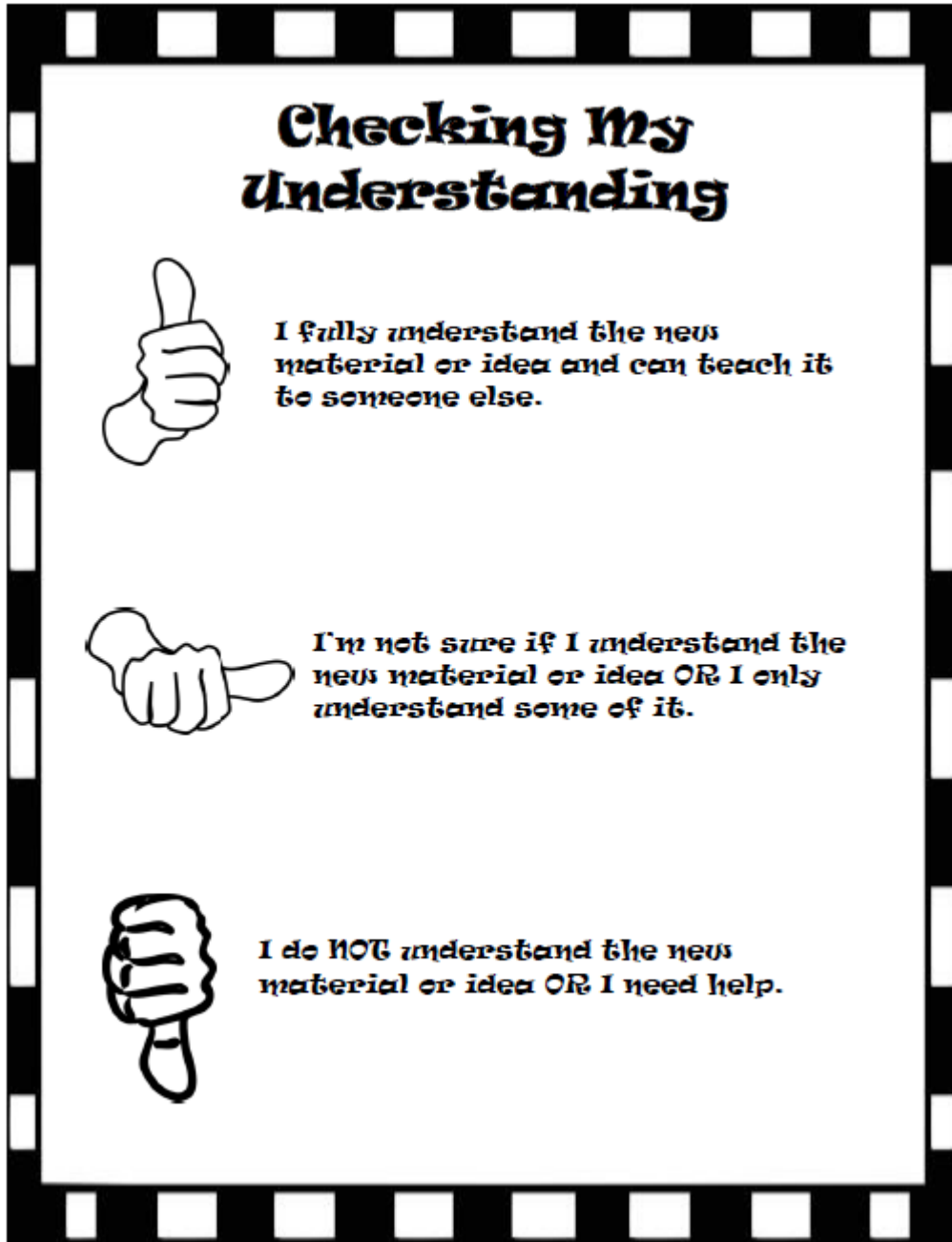
 <p>I like how you...</p> <p>That was a great way to...</p> <p>Nice work showing...</p> <p>That is an excellent...</p> <p>You have nice...</p> <p>You were able to...</p> <p>I like the way...</p> <p>You are good at...</p> <p>We were safe by...</p>	<p>You were responsible by...</p> <p>Nice job...</p> <p>It looks like you...</p> <p>We do well...</p> <p>Today you were...</p> <p>Thank you for...</p> <p>What a nice way to...</p> <p>It was nice of you to...</p> <p>You were respectful by...</p>
---	--

Remember to say a polite "THANK YOU" after you receive a compliment.


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Appendix E


Check My Understanding Poster



Checking My Understanding

 ***I fully understand the new material or idea and can teach it to someone else.***

 ***I'm not sure if I understand the new material or idea OR I only understand some of it.***

 ***I do NOT understand the new material or idea OR I need help.***

Appendix F

Assess Yourself Student Self-Assessment Sheet

Name _____

Date _____

Assess Yourself

Check the box that best applies to you.

I'm a novice.

I'm just starting to learn this, and I don't really understand it yet.



I'm an apprentice.

I'm starting to get it, but I still need someone to coach me through it.



I'm a practitioner.

I can mostly do it by myself, but I sometimes mess up or get stuck.



I'm an expert.

I understand it well and I could teach it to someone else.









Explain your answer.

Appendix G

Lesson 6 Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____




	I did a good job	I did an ok job	I did not do this very well
I gave a compliment in a nice polite voice			
I said thank you in a nice polite voice when receiving a compliment			




Appendix H

Lesson 8 Self Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

This group really helped me do my best learning	This group kind of helped me do my best learning	This group did not help me do my best learning
		




I did my best reading today	I kind of did my best reading today	I did not do my best reading today
		




Appendix I




Lesson 10 Self Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

This group really helped me do my best learning	This group kind of helped me do my best learning	This group did not help me do my best learning
		

I did my best reading today	I kind of did my best reading today	I did not do my best reading today
		

I gave a compliment to my partner	I gave part of a compliment to my partner	I did not give a compliment to my partner
		

Appendix J**Reading Skills Check Off Form**

	Skill practiced	Tries both long and short vowel sounds with a tricky word				
Student Name						