"What if…." Writing Fiction in First Grade

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Introduction

"Things That Happen in Fiction" could be titled "Things That Happen in First Grade". A first grader's life is full of surprise and mystery. "My mom was mad at me because I was mean to my fake sister," says an only child. "I was swimming in my pool and a shark came up so my dad punched it," says the resident of an apartment. In response to "What did you do yesterday?" comes, "We went swimming at the beach." in December or, my favorite, "We went to Disney World." "How did you get there?" "We drove." A first grader blends truth and fiction to create a narrative that they can retell and, most importantly, believe in.

The question most teachers in first grade ask is, "How do I get those great stories that were shared out loud written down on paper?" Writing time is met with groans. A minute after a prompt is given, "I'm done!" cascades through the classroom. The students have stories to tell, frankly, they won't shut up about them, but when asked to put pencil to paper…. nothing.

Writing is a difficult proposition in first grade (and beyond), and the majority of our writing is centered on nonfiction prompts. Most students are unengaged, reluctant writers. Our writing curriculum has taken what should be the joy of communicating and replaced it with the drudgery of capitals and periods, finger spaces and neatness, spelling, informing and persuading. As Teresa Cremins writes, "Teachers must seek to avoid developing learners who can cope with the technical demands of written language, but who derive little pleasure or satisfaction from engaging in such activities, and who have little sense of what the written word can offer them."[1]

We need to develop our young writers' enthusiasm for writing as well as their technical competency.

This unit will engage students in the creative process and, in the end, have them create a presentation of their story whether through Book Creator, filming their story, or some other medium. This presentation will provide an authentic audience for their writing, besides the teacher, something that is missing from most writing assignments. The unit will begin with the basic tenants of reading comprehension and then translate those ideas into formulating students' own stories. Students will develop their story ideas using dramatic play. Writing can include, pencil on paper, typing, and recording stories orally.

Many, but not all students, let their fear of the physical act of writing hinder their ability to tell a story. This unit will help students become proficient in communicating their ideas through whichever medium works best for their needs.

Reading Comprehension topics to explore include story retelling with beginning, middle and end, summarizing, problem and solution, setting, character traits, dialogue, and author's purpose. Topics on fiction include seven elements of fiction, where stories come from and brainstorming our own ideas. The use of dramatic play as a way to enhance creativity in storytelling and the use of technology to deliver works to an authentic audience will also be discussed.

Background

The elementary school where I teach is comprised of many different kinds of students. Our school has approximately 1200 students from Kindergarten through 5th grade. There are nine 1st grade classrooms grouped together in three clusters of three rooms. This year I have 22 students from Hispanic, African, Caribbean and Indian cultures as well as students whose families are from the United States. Socio-economically, my class is diverse with all economic classes represented. Every class presents its own behavior challenges and I have students who cover all the colors of the behavior spectrum. Students will have a range of experiences that they will bring to their understanding of the stories and that they will be able to incorporate into their own writing.

Students learn all academic subjects in the first grade classroom. These subjects are Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Math, Science and Social Studies. This allows for incorporating different standards from different subjects into one lesson. It is not uncommon to have Social Studies standards addressed in a Language Arts lesson and vice versa. Depending on the stories we read and create, different Common Core State Standards and Delaware State Standards for Science and Social Studies may be addressed.

We use the Response to Intervention educational model in both Reading and Math. Using benchmark tests, teacher observation and other data we divide the first grade students in our wing – about 70 of them, into 3 homogeneous groups by ability for 30 minutes of instruction. Students who need work on short vowel sounds are grouped with like students. Those that are ready for other phonics skills are grouped together and those who have mastered their phonics move on to reading comprehension. This unit can be taught in half hour increments as an enrichment unit during our Reading Intervention block with on or above level reading groups or as part of the regular classroom with a heterogeneous cohort. If taught during RTI, there will be roughly 30 students at approximately the same level in the group. Those 30 students will then be broken down into smaller groups who will work on a project that they will then share with the class as

a whole. No matter which area of reading instruction this is taught in, the needs and strengths of the groups will decide which activities we will use to show comprehension.

Learning Objectives

The goal of this unit is to have students create their own work of fiction. Students will use the story elements that they learn during reading instruction to facilitate this process. Students will work individually and in groups and create a final project that they will share with the teacher, the class, and the wider world via outlets such as iBooks and YouTube.

Concepts

As we have talked about in seminar, there are really only two types of stories, "A stranger comes into town." and "A hero goes on a journey." This idea has been attributed to many writers, John Gardner and Fyodor Dostoyevsky among them.[2] Regardless of who said it, it is basically true. Harold of Purple Crayon fame went on a journey using only his imagination and trusty crayon. Thor comes down from Asgaard and many stories of his exploits are chronicled by Marvel Comics. Of course, as our students retell a story we require more details than just these observations.

Comprehension

In order for students to write a coherent narrative, they must have some narratives modeled for them. When students understand that writing can tell us a story, that it makes sense, that a narrative moves forward, keeps us engaged, and ultimately (usually) comes to some sort of resolution, they can try to emulate that in their own work. The story structures we study for reading comprehension can then be applied to their writing.

Reading comprehension involves the following: retelling, summarizing, problem and solution, setting, character and physical traits, and author's purpose.

Retelling: Reading Rockets, a national multimedia reading initiative for young learners describes retelling as "having students orally reconstruct a story that they have read. Retelling requires students to activate their knowledge of how stories work and apply it to the new reading. As part of retelling, students engage in ordering and summarizing information and in making inferences. The teacher can use retelling as a way to assess how well students comprehend a story, then use this information to help students develop a deeper understanding of what they have read."[3] In first grade, we are looking for students to tell, in their own words, what happened in a story in the beginning, in the middle and at the end.

This differs from the strategy of summarizing.

Summarizing: Reading Quest defines summarizing as "how we take larger selections of text and reduce them to their bare essentials: the gist, the key ideas, the main points that are worth noting and remembering."[4] Students can summarize passages of their reading as they go along to help with their understanding of the text. They can then use that summary in their retelling.

Problem and Solution: Many works of fiction will have the hero of the story encounter a problem and use their wits, friends and/or an outside element such as magic to solve that problem.

Setting: The setting of the story is where and when the story takes place. The setting often changes during the course of the story.

Character and Physical Traits: Character traits are adjectives used to describe a character's personality as opposed to physical traits which describe how a character looks. Both are important to give readers a sense as to how a character acts and appears.
Author's Purpose: Why did the author write the story? Was it to persuade you to do something? Was it to inform you about something? Was it to entertain you? Most fiction is written to entertain but the other two purposes can also be interwoven into the story.

Whether we are reading, watching, or listening to a piece of fiction, the above concepts are all important for students to understand. Many graphic organizers to help students organize their ideas can be found at the Florida Center for Reading Research's website.

Fiction

You may ask, "Why write fiction in first grade? The Common Core State Standards focuses on opinion pieces, informative/explanatory texts and narratives, mostly taught as personal narratives."[5] Fiction provides our students with an opportunity to develop their imagination and creativity. As students go forward in life, they will find themselves in many situations that require a creative solution to a problem. If we have not nurtured their creative spirit, they may find those solutions hard to come by. Another and probably more relevant reason in first grade is that fiction can be fun, if we let it.

In 1st grade, many teachers explain the difference between nonfiction and fiction simplistically as one is real and the other is not. Talking dogs? Fiction. Facts about dogs? Nonfiction. This becomes problematic when we get to stories featuring people doing those things that people can really do. Merriam-Webster defines fiction as "written stories about people and events that are not real: literature that tells stories which are imagined by the writer"[6] Stories need not have talking animals to be fiction. A story

about my tea with the Queen could happen, but is a work of my imagination and therefore fiction.

In his chapter on introducing fairytales in Making Believe on Paper, Ted DeMille identifies seven elements of fiction. Some of these correspond to our reading comprehension strategies.

The Lead: The lead gets your reader interested in the story. It is an invitation to the reader to enter the writer's world.

A Description of the Setting: Readers need to be able to imagine where the story takes place. Students should not just rely on their illustrations to evoke a sense of time and place but should use strong descriptive language to take their readers there.

The Introduction and Description of the Main Character: The story exists for the character to inhabit. Students need to describe not only how characters look but how they act and how they feel inside. Readers want to know the main character and identify with him or her on some level.

The Problem: In my experience, first grade writers rarely have their characters encounter a problem, but most good fiction has the main character encounter and, we hope, overcome one. Whether it is as daunting as Harry Potter facing Voldemort or as trivial as Toad losing his list of things to do today, the problem is what keeps us reading. Characters can struggle against other characters (antagonists), against nature, or even against themselves as we wait with baited breath to see how they will resolve their struggle.

The Rising Action: This is what happens in the story between the discovery of the problem and the beginning of its resolution. This is where the main character puts together the plan on how to solve the problem. In good stories, the tension builds as the character encounters supporting characters who either help or hinder his progress.

The Climax: The high point of the story. The enemy is defeated, the treasure found, true love reunited. Problem solved.

The Ending and Resolution: Children model their storytelling on what they have seen, heard, and read. Most stories will end happily, but depending on a student's experiences, things may not always work out the best for the character.[7]

Where Do Stories Come From?

A few years ago, I wrote a unit for the Delaware Teachers Institute called Anansi and the Arts that answered this question. Stories come from a box that Anansi won from the sky

god by performing three labors. Anansi opened the box and the stories flew to the far reaches of the world. Unfortunately, these stories are very hard to catch and write down as one's own.

The author Neil Gaiman answered a seven year old who asked a variation of that question with this:

> You get ideas from daydreaming. You get ideas from being bored. You get ideas all the time. The only difference between writers and other people is we notice when we're doing it. You get ideas when you ask yourself simple questions. The most important of the questions is just, What if...? (What if you woke up with wings? What if your sister turned into a mouse? What if you all found out that your teacher was planning to eat one of you at the end of term - but you didn't know who?)
> Another important question is, If only... (If only real life was like it is in Hollywood musicals. If only I could shrink myself small as a button. If only a ghost would do my homework.)
> And then there are the others: I wonder... ('I wonder what she does when she's alone...') and If This Goes On... ('If this goes on telephones are going to start talking to each other, and cut out the middleman...') and Wouldn't it be interesting if... ('Wouldn't it be interesting if the world used to be ruled by cats?')...
> Those questions, and others like them, and the questions they, in their turn, pose ('Well, if cats used to rule the world, why don't they anymore? And how do they feel about that?') are one of the places ideas come from.[8]

He goes on to say that all you need is an idea and then you write. Sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't. You throw it away and start again. Where does he get the ideas? "I make them up." "Out of my head."

In my class we have a "Wonderwall". As we are learning about something, like bats, students write on Post Its and put them on the wall. "Do bats drink blood?" "How high do bats fly?" We can use our "wonders" as a stepping stone to create our stories. Tell the story of a vampire bat who drinks milk not blood. Tell the story of the bat who is afraid of heights. As Neil Gaiman says, all questions lead to other questions.

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play, "a type of play where children accept and assign roles, and then act them out"[9], has fallen out of fashion in the early grades. My daughter, an 11th grader, is an excellent writer whose preschool and kindergarten experiences featured prominent dramatic play areas. My son, a 6th grader, is still a very reluctant writer whose experience did not contain prevalent dramatic play. Is there a correlation? According to Teresa Cremin in Teaching English Creatively, "Play, which is essentially improvisational in

nature, can give rise to many reasons for writing, as well as help generate the content of the communication."[10]

According to Dr. Martha Buell of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Delaware and Director, Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood in an email dated October 22, 2015,

1) Dramatic play builds vocabulary, and background knowledge about the world (if it is a good, rich intentional dramatic play)
2) children won't write what they won't say
3) children won't write what they don't know

I will provide time and materials (simple props, masks, puppets, costumes) for students to explore their storytelling abilities. Earlychildhoodnews.com has suggestions that can help incorporate dramatic play into the classroom.

During morning centers I am going to have a free dramatic play area, but during Reading I am going to structure the dramatic play into analyzing a story that we are reading. Students will create a tableau where they will freeze frame a scene from the story and then, one at a time, each student will describe what the character (or even piece of furniture, tree, animal etc. in the setting) is thinking at that moment. Students will also role-play a scene from the story, acting out what is happening in that time. For a video on how both these strategies look please see teacher resources at the end.

Technology

As students create their works they will be using graphic organizers and storyboards to organize their ideas. Students will write their stories on paper and then have the opportunity to use technology to bring them to life. The use of technology will allow students to share their stories with a larger audience. Giving their ideas a larger, authentic audience will provide more incentive for them to try their best.

Students will be able to shoot a movie using an iPad. Depending on time, we will use one-take film shoots with no editing. If time allows we will use a program such as iMovie to make a more sophisticated production. Students can either act or create puppets to tell their story. If students have difficulty collaborating on a project, students may use apps such as Puppet Pals and Book Creator to tell their story independently. Puppet Pals provides characters and settings and the students move the characters on the screen while recording their narration. If students choose to go down this path, it would be best for them to create stories that utilize the characters and scenery that is included in the program. Students will also be able to use Book Creator. Using either drawn pictures or photos, students would narrate their story as the visuals change. Videos will be posted to a private YouTube channel and books uploaded to iBooks where they can be downloaded for free by their family.

Classroom Strategies

I will be reading stories to the class. Students will be re-reading stories with partners and by themselves. How do I increase student engagement during this mostly sedentary activity?

The first grade teachers at my school utilize The Daily Five during our reading block. The Daily Five allows students to have choice in how they do their work. I plan on using the independence and stamina that our students have gained to my advantage during the teaching of this unit.

One easy way to engage the students in the lesson is to give them some control. I might not be able to give choice on what I want them to read but I can give them the choice of where they will read it. The days of students sitting at their desks reading their book are over in my class. Students have the freedom to sit, lie down, or even stand where they choose during reading time, as long as they stay on task. If the student is comfortable, they should be able to stay focused for a longer period of time.

Students are social animals, so I will allow many opportunities for discussion in my class. We have "macaroni and cheese" partners and "spaghetti and meatball" partners and these designations allow me to pair students up and make sure that there is parity on who goes first – a very important role in 1st grade. When appropriate, we will also do "mingles" where students wander the classroom to music and when the music stops they pair up with the closest person to exchange ideas or information. These engagement strategies can be used at different areas of the lessons to get kids talking (which they will do anyway) or up and moving around.

Classroom Activities

Unit Introduction: This should take one class period.
Vocabulary: fiction, imagination
Standards: CCSS: SL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6
Content Objectives: Students will understand that fictional stories come from our imagination. They may be rooted in facts or may be totally make believe.

Opening: Ask students what they think cultures all around the world have in common. Culture is defined by Merriam-Webster as "the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place or time"[11]. If necessary, prod them to say stories. Ask students to turn to their partners and discuss where they think stories come from. Write down students' ideas. Do stories in Africa come from the same place they do in America? Why or why not?

Instruction: Find "A Traditional Zulu Story" on the Internet and either play it from youtube or read a version of it. Discuss what happened in the story. Ask students if this is really where stories come from? Paraphrase the Neil Gaiman quote above about how stories come from our imaginations and how we can get ideas from asking questions. Brainstorm a few ideas for stories as a class. Save for later.

Assessment: Have partners turn to each other and, one at a time, give ideas about stories they could tell. This should last no more than 1 minute. Walk around the room and note different ideas and, when they are finished, share them with the class.

Lesson One: Comprehension: The Boy Who Cried Wolf. This lesson will take two class periods.
Vocabulary: character, setting, problem, solution, beginning, middle, end, retelling
Standards: CCSS: RL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, RF 1.4, SL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6
Content Objectives: Students will listen to a story, read that same story with a partner, identify key details and story elements, reenact the story, orally retell, and write a scaffolded retelling of the story.

Day One: Read the story of The Boy Who Cried Wolf to the class. I am lucky enough to have a subscription to Reading A-Z.com and I use the reproducible book that they have there. The book is at a 1st grade reading level and has illustrations on every page and is formatted for the smartboard. The book is also available wordless which I will use later to help students retell the story. After reading the story to the class, hand out books and they will read it again with their reading partner. Even in my leveled Intervention class there is a large range of reading proficiency so my class is (secretly) divided into four groups of readers, high, high medium, low medium and low. Reading partners are assigned with my highest readers reading with my lower middle reading group and my lowest reading with my higher middle group. Students sit next to each other, elbow to elbow, knee to knee and take turns reading page by page. After students have read the story at least twice, we will reconvene and talk about the story. Why was this story first told? Why is it still told? Did it really happen as written? If not, could something like this have happened in real life?

Day Two: Hand out the books and have students re-read The Boy Who Cried Wolf with their partner. Collect the books and hand out wordless books. If not using the book from readingatoz.com make sure that your pages and pictures correspond to the pages and pictures of the book you are using. Have students look at the wordless book and tell them that in each space provided, they should write what is happening in the story. Tell them to make sure they add details to the story so the reader knows what is happening.

Assessment: Did they retell the whole story. Did they have a beginning, a middle, and an end? Did they add details? Did they remember the moral of the story?

Lesson Two: Comprehension: Goldilocks and the Three Bears. This lesson will take three class periods.
Vocabulary: reenact, dramatic play
Standards: CCSS: RL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, RF 1.4, SL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6
Content Objectives: Students will listen to a story, read that same story with a partner, identify key details and story elements, reenact the story, orally retell, and write a scaffolded retelling of the story.

Day One: Read the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. After reading the story out loud, hand out copies to students and, as before, they will read it themselves along with a reading partner. Reconvene the whole class and discuss the characters and setting of the story. Students at this point can create stick puppets to use in tomorrow's lesson.

Day Two: We will reread the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Students will turn to their partners and retell the story. Listen to the retellings. Do students add details or do they just give a basic retelling. In my experience, most retellings are short, lack details, and may omit the end of the story. Students will now get a chance to reenact the story. Break the students into groups of four and students will now play Goldilocks or one of the three bears in their group. Good classroom management is essential to make sure students are on task and not too loud. Students will act out the story several times, playing different characters each time. For students worried about gender roles, Golidlocks' name can be changed to something your students will accept. You can use the created stick puppets for this or actually physically act it out. If time is not an issue, students can create masks either through resources on the internet or using paper plates to help them get into character. Circulate through the room and listen as they act out the story. Were the porridges too hot, too cold, and just right? Did Goldilocks break a chair? Which bed did she sleep in? What happened when the bears came home? Reconvene the group and have them orally retell with their partner. They can take turns retelling different scenes, adding details to their partners retelling. What I have found is that students' retellings after they have acted it out are much more detailed than before.

Day Three: Hand out the wordless book. If not using the book from readingatoz.com, make sure that your pages and pictures correspond to the pages and pictures of the book you are using. Remind students that they do not to retell the story exactly as it happened in the book but that should make sure that they include all the major details. The illustrations will help them with this. Another idea is that you can have the students story board the tale. Using Post It notes and paper, students can draw what happens in the beginning of the story, all three actions in the middle (porridge, chairs and beds), and then the end of the story. They can affix the pictures to a paper that leaves space for their writing. Giving the students choice on how to retell (filling out the wordless book or storyboarding) should increase their engagement in the task.

Assessment: Did students retell the story in the correct order with a beginning, a middle, and an end? Did students have all the necessary details?

At this time, I am going to open my dramatic play area during my morning centers. I will show students the items that they may use, remind them how to use things appropriately, specifically no hands on behavior and no real or simulated violence, and also how to put items away when it is time to clean up. I will encourage students to add their own embellishments as they perform Goldilocks and the Three Bears, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, and subsequent stories. This will provide the intentionality that Dr. Buell talked about in her email and I hope that it will pay off with richer narratives when we get to our writing.

Lesson Three: Comprehension The Tortoise and the Hare. This lesson will take three class periods
Vocabulary: tableau
Standards: CCSS: RL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, RF 1.4, SL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6
Content Objectives: Students will listen to a story, read that same story with a partner, identify key details and story elements, reenact the story, orally retell, and write a scaffolded retelling of the story.

Day One will proceed as before in lessons one and two.

Day Two: Students will read with, this time high with medium high, medium low with low and again they will be asked to retell the story. Do they have details? Did the hare brag? Did the hare stop for a snack? What was the moral?

Day Three: If it is nice outside, take the students on the playground. Divide them into groups of three, tortoise, hare, and narrator. Have the tortoise and the hare act out as the narrator retells the story. Have students change roles. If it is not nice weather, this story is a good one for the students to create a tableau. Students freeze a frame of the story, such as the hare taking a nap and the tortoise passing him, and then describe what is going on in the character's mind. What is the tortoise thinking about as he passes the hare? What is the hare dreaming about? This is a different way to act out the story and to get into the heads of the characters and, by extension, the author.

Assessment: When finished, have students write and illustrate a retelling of the story. If necessary, you can continue on with other stories out of your curriculum, having students act them out, creating tableaux, and retelling them through words and illustrations until they have mastered the standards.

Lesson Four: Writing: "What if…?" This lesson will take as many class periods as needed.
Vocabulary: description, action, climax, resolution

Standards: CCSS: SL 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, W1.4
Content Objectives: Students will create their own works of fiction.

Day One: Read Barry Moser's version of the Three Little Pigs and discuss the story. Ask students, "What if the pig was big and bad and there were three little wolves?" Have students turn to their partners and discuss what they think would happen in such a scenario. Then read The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury. Discuss how authors can take stories that we already know and ask and answer the question "What if…?".

Day Two: Today brainstorm ideas. Think back to all the books that you have read to your students to model some ideas. What if the boy cried frog instead of wolf? What if Goldilocks had come when the bears were home? What if the hare did not stop for a nap? Give a scenario with characters the students already know but with a change in the story and have students act it out. Students should try to answer the questions: who did what where, when, and why during their dramatic play.

Day Three: Continue to brainstorm with ideas not from established stories. What if a bat drank milk instead of blood? What if snow was made of mashed potatoes? What if dogs could type? Again, have students act out these scenarios answering the above questions.

Days Four - ?: Students should pick a "What if…?" story to tell and this could take them many days to finish. Give students a graphic organizer and have them write down their title. Have them write what happens in the beginning of their story, the middle and the end. For many 1st graders, that will be like the stories they are used to writing. Our goal is to get more. We need more details. Looking at Ted DeMille's seven elements of fiction, we need a description of our setting, we need a description of our main character, our character needs a problem, we need something to happen and then the climax and a resolution to the problem. This will be difficult for 1st graders and will need to modeled and worked on together. Students should add details to their setting and their characters. Have them draw picture of their character at the beginning of the story. When they are finished have them add more details to the picture. Are they intentional in their choice of colors? Is the dog really blue? Is the grass grey?

Now we can work on our stories. We have a beginning, a middle, and an end written on our graphic organizer which we will turn into our story. Students will take their ideas and turn them into sentences. Even though students are focusing on their narratives, we are still looking for capitals and punctuation, finger spacing, neatness and phonetic spelling. As students write their sentences and their stories move along in time, have them add transition words as appropriate. A good list is available through Reading Rockets.

Are there any other characters? Draw them out and add details before they put them in the story.

What happens in the story? Have students focus on one event or one problem. Advanced writers can have further adventures. When the problem is overcome, how does the character react? How does the character feel?

Have students, in groups, act out each other's stories. Have the author narrate as the students act it out. Does it make sense? Is everything there that needs to be? If not add what needs to be there.

One way that we can help students add to pieces that they are already writing is to make sure that we have plenty of space between lines. This way students can add words or sentences they forgot without the frustration of rewriting their whole story.

What do we do with students who have great stories to tell but who may still be writing in letter strings or who might not have the writing stamina to flesh out their whole story? We can give those students the choice of writing via a cartoon storyboard, drawing most of their details and writing minimal text, which we may need to scribe for them.

Lesson Five: Showtime. This lesson will take as many class periods as needed.
Standards: CCSS W1.6
Content Objectives: Using technology, students will create an adaptation of their stories.

Day One -?: The Common Core has a standard for writing, 1.6, that requires students to use digital tools to produce and publish writing. In 1st grade, we usually do this via Google slides when students create and publish slides with facts that they have learned about an animal. I want to try and do something more. This past year I went to a session at a technology conference that was about this standard. It is very simple, using any tablet or smartphone, for students to create one-take videos. If you have the time and equipment, students can also make relatively simple videos using iMovie or another movie making software package, some of your students might have already done so. Students can upload photos and drawings and then narrate their story via apps such as Book Creator. Students can use characters that are already created and tell their own story via apps such as puppet pals. These apps are very intuitive and, given the ability to experiment with them, your students will be able to figure out how to use them relatively easily.

On his blog, "Technology for Teachers", Richard Byrne gives a rundown and pros and cons of the different kinds of projects, most using free software, that you might have your students do.

Students, working in groups for video projects or individually of others, will then make these projects accessible for parents via a private channel on YouTube or the iBooks store for Book Creator projects. Good classroom management is, again, very important in this step. Students need to act respectfully to each other as they work to adapt their classmates' stories into their projects. As students work on their projects, I would expect to see the stories evolve as more ideas are added to the narratives. This should be encouraged as one student's story turns into a collaborative effort.

Appendix

Appendix A

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts
Reading Standards for Literature[12]
Key Ideas and Details:
RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
RL 1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
RL 1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
Craft and Structure:
RL 1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
RL 1.9 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
Reading: Foundational Skills[13]
Fluency
RF 1.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
Speaking and Listening Standards[14]
Comprehension and Collaboration:
SL 1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
b. Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion
SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
SL 1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
SL 1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
SL 1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

Reading Standards for Writing[15]

Text Types and Purposes

W1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W1.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Resources for Teachers and Students

"A Traditional Zulu Story." YouTube. Accessed November 29, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjH1_4ZxW0k.
Video of how stories came to be.

Boushey, Gail, and Joan Moser. *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers, 2006.
Classroom management system for Reading block. Fosters independence in students.

Byrne, Richard. "Video Creation." Free Technology for Teachers. Accessed December 11, 2015. http://www.freetech4teachers.com/p/video-creation-resources.html#.VnA_zGQrJUM.
Ideas for creating videos for student projects.

Cremin, Teresa. "Developing Writers Creatively - The Early Years." In *Teaching English Creatively*. London: Routledge, 2009.
How to help young students in the writing process.

DeMille, Ted. *Making Believe on Paper: Fiction Writing with Young Children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008.
How to teach writing to early primary students.

"Earlychildhood NEWS." Earlychildhood NEWS. Accessed December 11, 2015. http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/.
Information for early childhood and primary classrooms.

“Comprehension.” Florida Center For Reading Research. Accessed December 11, 2015. http://www.fcrr.org/curriculum/PDF/GK-1/C_Final.pdf
Many graphic organizers to use for reading and writing instruction.

Gaiman, Neil. "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?" Neil Gaiman. Accessed December 15, 2015. http://www.neilgaiman.com/Cool_Stuff/Essays/Essays_By_Neil/Where_do_you_get_your_ideas?
Neil Gaiman writes about where ideas come from.

Hall, Nigel, and Anne Robinson. *Exploring Writing and Play in the Early Years*. 2nd ed. London: David Fulton, 2003.
Explores the correlation between purposeful play and writing for 3 – 8 year olds.

"Horniman Museum and Gardens." Browse Our Collections. Accessed November 29, 2015. http://www.horniman.ac.uk/collections/browse-our-collections/authority/subject/identifier/subject-314.
"A Traditional Zulu Story" The story of how stories were brought to the people.

Moser, Barry. *The Three Little Pigs*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2001.
Be careful, the pigs get eaten!

"Reading A-Z." : The Online Leveled Reading Program with Downloadable Books to Print and Assemble. Accessed December 15, 2015. https://www.readinga-z.com/.
Find leveled books for use in the classroom including The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Goldilocks and the Three Bears and The Tortoise and the Hare.

"Reading, Writing, and Role Play." Teaching Channel. Accessed December 15, 2015. https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/reading-writing-role-playing.
Video on how dramatic play and tableaux can be used in the classroom.

"Transition Words." Accessed December 11, 2015. http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/transition words.pdf.
Transition words to use for writing.

Trivizas, Eugenios, and Helen Oxenbury. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997.
What if the roles were reversed?

Notes

[1] Teresa Cremin, Teaching English Creatively (London: Routledge, 2009) pg 70.
[2] http://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/05/06/two-plots/ (accessed 15 December 2015).
[3] "Strategies that Promote Comprehension" http://www.readingrockets.org/article/strategies-promote-comprehension (accessed 15 December 2015).
[4] "Strategies for Reading Comprehension: Summarizing" http://www.readingquest.org/strat/summarize.html (accessed 15 December 2015).
[5] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/1/ (accessed 15 December 2015).
[6] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fiction (accessed 15 December 2015).
[7] Ted DeMille, Making Believe on Paper (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008) 118-112.
[8] Neil Gaiman, "Where Do You Get Your Ideas" http://www.neilgaiman.com/Cool_Stuff/Essays/Essays_By_Neil/Where_do_you_get_your_ideas%3F (accessed 15 December 2015).
[9] Marie E. Cecchini, "How Dramatic Play Can enhance Learning" http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=751 (accessed 15 December 2015).
[10] Cremin, Teaching English Creatively pg 74.
[11] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture (accessed 15 December 2015).
[12] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/1/ (accessed 15 December 2015).
[13] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/1/ (accessed 15 December 2015).
[14] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/1/ (accessed 15 December 2015).
[15] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/1/ (accessed 15 December 2015).

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KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

1st grade students can create, administer surveys and analyze the data they report.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

Using comprehension strategies that students have learned in their reading, students can write their own fictional stories

CONCEPT A	**CONCEPT B**	**CONCEPT C**
Storiesw come from our imagination.	We can understand what a story is trying to tell us.	We can write interesting fictional stories.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A	**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B**	**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C**
Where do stories come from?	What makes a story we read interesting?	How can we take what we have learned about stories from reading them and use that to write our own stories?
VOCABULARY A	**VOCABULARY B**	**VOCABULARY C**
Imagination, storytelling, fiction, dramatic play	Main idea, details, retelling	The lead, main character, problem, solution

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

Cremin, Teresa. "Developing Writers Creatively - The Early Years." In *Teaching English Creatively*. London: Routledge, 2009.
How to help young students in the writing process.

DeMille, Ted. *Making Believe on Paper: Fiction Writing with Young Children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008.
How to teach writing to early primary students.

Hall, Nigel, and Anne Robinson. *Exploring Writing and Play in the Early Years*. 2nd ed. London: David Fulton, 2003.
Explores the correlation between purposeful play and writing for 3 – 8 year olds.