

Empowering English Learners Through Creative Nonfiction

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Introduction

Writing about oneself has always proven to be too raw and uncomfortable for me as a writer. Therefore, I have never insisted my students write very personal, personal narratives. Poems with the subjects being my students tended to be light-hearted and funny, not intrusive and revealing. The idea of Creative Nonfiction has given me a different perspective on writing about oneself that I never imagined I could have. The idea that one could tell their story and add creative elements to that story is intriguing. Bigger yet, the idea that a writer could tell their story and alter it so that all of their secrets were not revealed and pain not completely exposed - experience creatively enhanced - is freeing!

The death of my father when I was five, thrust me into a single-parent household, one where I did not feel I belonged. Always feeling that I was in the way, that I was somehow at fault, that maybe I should have been the one to die pervaded my everyday life. Life was hard, and I never felt worthy enough to tell anyone how hard it was; I had no apparent vehicle to help me. Mistakenly, I thought I'd found that vehicle in an undergrad speech class. I had written a speech about my father, prepared a scene in which I would deliver it, and literally came apart at the seams, crying and unable to talk, unable to tell my story. Although I have never been able to truly tell my story, I look forward to learning how to initiate stories from my students and empower them to tell theirs with confidence.

How do I provide the means for my English Learners to tell me about their lives? Would a seventeen and newly motherless girl meeting a stranger who was going to transport her from Guatemala through a raging river to Mexico, and turning herself into immigration and being placed in a home with strangers for 24 days feel comfortable telling another stranger about her life? What about a boy who left his mom and brother in Mexico to come to America, go to school, and work every day of the week - for forty-nine hours? Would he be able to tell me how he feels to know that every day he is separated from her loving arms? Another of my students - a newcomer - who walked into the new school year fourteen days late, speaking another language, getting lost his second day and hiding out in the bathroom, how do I get him to trust me enough to write the details of his life? I will offer them creative nonfiction options.

My ultimate goal for this unit is to provide the means and the tools to my English Learners to present their stories, the worthy stories that have brought them to our country, our school, our classroom. I want my students to feel that they and their stories are valued and that there is a power in telling others who you are, what you've experienced, and where you came from. These means will include reading fictional and nonfictional texts from our Common Core curriculum that center around the idea of "chasing success," reading a novel about a high school student who refuses to speak a truth that is haunting her, and listening to a podcast describing one woman's journey to America. The tools will include writing an "I Am" poem¹ and letters from a character's point of view which I believe will ease my students into writing about themselves. They will write a personal narrative, interview a family member, and deliver a podcast showcasing that interview.

Background

I am a teacher of English Learners (ELs). I teach 11th & 12th grade English, English Language Development, Level 2 (ELD2), and am a push in/pull out teacher for other content classes at John Dickinson High School (Dickinson) in Wilmington, DE in the Red Clay Consolidated School District. My students this year in my English classes and my ELD2 class are Hispanic and come from many different South American and Caribbean countries; two were born in the U.S., but raised in Mexico. My push in/pull out students come from mainly Hispanic countries, but I do have a student from Yemen and one from Vietnam.

As of September 30, 2019, Dickinson had 827 students enrolled. 106 of these students are English Learners. There are two teachers of ELs and one Spanish-speaking paraprofessional at Dickinson. The second teacher teaches 9th & 10th grade English, ELD1, and a writing class (study skills). The paraprofessional is employed solely to support ELs in their content classes apart from English; these include math, social studies, science, and elective classes.

Red Clay uses the annual ACCESS Test to measure English Proficiency in Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading. Every winter, the EL students at Dickinson take the four ACCESS tests. Although I understand the purpose of the test, I rarely see the ELs test out of the program. Based on what I have witnessed, it would be difficult for some native speakers to receive a score high enough to test out. This promotes negativity and feelings of defeat, something these students feel quite regularly. Even if an EL has become a Parent Withdraw, a student who no longer receives services, he or she must still take the ACCESS test. Many of these students become angry, so they put forth little or no effort on the test, all in an attempt to leave the testing room and go back to their content classes,

leaving them with a terribly low score thus bringing them back another year. “The purpose of ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is to monitor student progress in English language proficiency (ELP) on a yearly basis and to serve as a criterion to aid in determining when ELLs have attained language proficiency comparable to that of their English-proficient peers.”² There are six performance definitions for the levels associated with English proficiency: Entering (1), Emerging (2), Developing (3), Expanding (4), Bridging (5), and Reaching (6). In order to test out of the English Learner program and to no longer take the ACCESS Test, students must score a cumulative score of 5. The students’ scores in my classes range from Entering level to Developing, some are newcomers, some have been here for a couple of years, and others are life- long ELs.

Rationale

The ELs are a group of students who routinely are forgotten and ignored in my school. Typically, students are printed a schedule, told to find a classroom, if they find it, walk into a class, are ignored by the teacher teaching the class, sit with other English Learners or people they perceive to be like them, and remain silent for the remainder of the year. They are not made to feel welcome, and their teachers assume that the EL teacher will eventually find them, differentiate for them, and help them navigate through the material of the class. Until that happens, the teachers of these classes tend to view the English Learners as unmotivated, uneducated, and unwilling to participate. The students receive failing grades, and life goes on leaving them further behind because they will have to repeat the course or be assigned an educational options (ed. ops.) class to complete the coursework online, in English. In 2018-2019, the amount of failures among English Learners grew significantly. The paraprofessional was asked to help students pass their ed.ops. classes which took valuable time away from newcomers in their content classes. The principal indicated that the district office was pressuring him for information as to why this was occurring so often and in such great volume. Dickinson needs to turn this negative situation around, and I believe they have the means to do that right in their midst.

Dickinson is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school and is working to improve that status by offering more opportunities to potential students. I believe we already have students who could help do this. Highlighting this group of students - the ELs - could be the answer. Instead of ignoring them, encourage them. So many of our ELs are advanced thinkers and would be honor students in their home countries. With more effort and inclusion on the part of Dickinson’s teachers, we could foster the growth of the IB program and boast about the bilingual attributes of our students.

ELs need to have a voice in our school; they need to feel like an important part of the school community, and this is where writing about themselves can help promote their feelings of confidence, a sense of belonging, a sense of worth. Through the activities that I present, I feel that I will allow my English Learners an opportunity that will give them a platform to feel important, to feel that they matter, to enable them to branch out and feel positive about their experience and no longer shy away and hide in the corner of the room, hoping the teacher doesn't spot them.

Unit Overview

Stemming from my ultimate goal, I offer two more specific goals, one relational and one linguistic. First, I want my students to feel that their sacrifices relate to the characters and people presented in the materials in our English class by feeling a sense of justification and maybe even satisfaction. They are on a path that many people have travelled. These people have found success and happiness. I want my students to begin to feel this too. Second, I want my students - newcomers to second and third year - to interact with and begin to use the target language (L2) with some level of ease and comfort. They will do this by writing a personal narrative, interviewing a family member and delivering a podcast.

There are a host of Common Core Standards aligned with the texts we will be reading in the unit and with the speaking and writing activities associated with the unit. All of these standards are presented and defined in the Appendix. The standards that I am most concerned with for the readings in this unit include: CCRL.1 & 2, CCRI. 1& 2. These four standards ask students to determine themes and central ideas. This task is essential for my students because I am asking them to relate to these readings through the activities that follow each of them. These standards also require students to make inferences which will further the relationship between themselves and the readings. Citing evidence will allow students to see how writers use language to tell stories and offer information. These are all important skills for students working with their first language but are extremely important for students learning a new language because it forces the students to look deeper into the target language and actually engage with it fully. The Speaking and Listening standards CCSL.1.C & D ask the students to propel conversations and respond thoughtfully. These two tasks are important for my students to acquire when they establish the questions for their interview and engage in the interview with their family member. One writing standard is especially important to the unit - CCW.3. Students are asked to write narratives in which they develop a true experience.

Unit Objectives

When preparing lessons for my English Learners, I consider the four elements of the ACCESS test that measure a student's English Proficiency: Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading. I include opportunities for my English Learners to listen to the English language, to speak the English language, to write using the English language, and to read the English language. This year, I have made a more pronounced effort to engage my English Learners in speaking activities that will enhance their pronunciation and promote confidence when using their L2. My school district requires teachers to engage in once-a-week meetings with other teachers to collaborate and grow in the profession. These are called professional learning communities (PLC). In my PLC assignment, I am partnered with a Spanish teacher who is from Puerto Rico. She was an English as a Second Language teacher while in Puerto Rico. We determined that the lack of oral fluency in our classes is impeding the interest, confidence, and growth of our students in their L2 languages. Therefore, we are working to improve our lessons and hopefully students' oral fluency through weekly speaking activities designed to encourage speaking using the L2 while engaging in a student-centered, relative way. Sarah Webb states, "Many English learners go through a silent period that can last up to a year as they develop receptive language and some confidence in their new surroundings, so we focused on building a classroom community embracing risk taking and encouraging oral language."³ Perhaps my unit will decrease the silent period in some of my students by empowering them.

This unit is designed for high school English Learners with a range of English Language Proficiencies, specifically 12th grade because of the texts taken from the 12th grade curriculum map. It really could be used with any high school class that is comprised of several age groups or higher abilities. Replacement of some of the texts or the activities would be easy done. But, I recommend retaining some form of personal narrative, the interview, and the podcast of the interview. For a newcomer, a picture essay could replace the personal narrative essay. A paragraph with sentence starters or a paragraph with content suggestions could replace the personal narrative for a second year English Learner. Both the interview and the podcast can be performed in the student's L2, and the amount of interview questions could be reduced. There are many ways to tailor the assessments to fit the needs of an EL classroom displaying a wide range of abilities.

Concepts

Sacrifice

In the story and the nonfiction readings, the characters explain the things they give up and change in order to find success. My students will analyze what one gives up in order to

succeed and ask and answer the questions, “Does a person have to sacrifice in order to find success?” What have these characters given up in their quest to succeed? What have my students given up to find the same? We will look into this idea of sacrifice and hopefully my students will find motivation in others’ sacrifice and success to keep striving to find their own. Sacrifice occurs within different levels of hardship to the individual. I’d like for my students to recognize these levels and understand that not all sacrifice has to be life altering; it could just be afternoon altering.

Motivation

Students will examine the role of motivation in the characters’ lives. They will ask the question of both the characters and themselves, “How does one stay motivated on this journey?” We will determine ways for my students to refocus and employ others to help them achieve their goals. Motivation wanes in all of us. Asking for help from classmates and teachers can push a student through a period of low motivation and refocus them on their goal. Through the readings and discussion, we will learn ways to ask for guidance.

The Cost of Success

After we determine the role of sacrifice, we will examine the costs associated sacrificing in order to achieve success. If so, how much or how often do they need to sacrifice. What types of things do the characters sacrifice? What types of things do the students sacrifice? Is the sacrifice and hardship worth the prize in the end? The students will learn that sacrifice is often part of getting the things they want. They will also learn that they can control some of what they sacrifice. They don’t have to give up everything they are and have to find success.

Content

The first unit in the 12th grade *Collections* is entitled “Chasing Success.” It begins with an anchor text called “A Walk to the Jetty.” This is a story about a young girl in Antigua who mother has made arrangements for her to travel to England to be trained as a nurse. The girl had no say in the arrangement and feels betrayed by her mother and vows to never return to her home in Antigua. I believe my students will be able to relate to this character, Annie. Despite the challenges of learning English as they read, they could understand Annie’s point of view. Many words and terms will be translated into my students’ first language (L1) so that main concepts can be understood before moving forward. Annie’s mother decided what success would be for Annie, something my students have felt leaving their country to come to America as their parent’s or other family members have chased success. In a further attempt to connect with the curriculum text, they will adopt Annie’s point of view and write letters home to Annie’s mom.

Students with higher English Language Proficiency can write a three-paragraph personal narrative from their point of view describing their parent's or their story of chasing success. Newcomers can complete the essay using their L1 or prepare a digital storyboard that will help them tell their story using pictures rather than focusing on the language to tell it. What I want most is to provide a vehicle for my students to tell their stories. Rusul Alrubail offers digital storytelling as a way to empower English Learners. "The process of creating a digital story guides students to think about why an idea, an experience or a story is important to them. This allows students to practice analyzing their own narratives, which fosters reflection and critical thinking."⁴

"Kewauna's Ambition" is a shorter text contained in the curriculum supplement called the Close Reader. In this supplement, the students are encouraged to engage with the text by writing on the pages, underlining and circling as they gain evidence and make meaning. Additional translating into the students' L1 is useful with this text to establish key ideas. The text examines how a young, black woman enables herself to succeed in college. Students will create a graphic that explains how they as students can succeed in the classroom: three ways they can succeed on their own, one way they can ask for help from a teacher, and one way they can ask for help from a classmate.

They will listen to and use as a model Blanca Alvarez's description of her family's journey to America in a podcast from StoryCorps. They can read along with the transcript as Blanca and her daughter talk about their memories. This podcast is presented using the L2. Translating and discussing the transcript could occur prior to listening. Blanca explains how she, pregnant with her daughter notices the ants and runs through the rocks barefoot to get across the border. Her daughter remembers tagging along with her parents to clean offices at night. My students will then interview a family member using interview questions determined and constructed by the class prior to the interview and record their experiences of coming to America. A podcast of that interview will allow my students to hear their own voices and those of their family members as they tell of their experiences of chasing success.

A third text associated with the Collection is "The Secret to Raising Smart Kids" by Carol S. Dweck. This text is not terribly long, but it offers a good deal of facts and information that I feel will confuse my students. I will photocopy this text so that my students can interact more fully with it by underlining, circling, and summarizing as we read. Students can underline key terms that can be translated into their L1. They can circle unknown words which can be clarified by defining them using the English Language Learner's Dictionary (Learner's Dictionary). I will summarize some long passages and present others using simpler language, Tier 2 words instead of Tier 3⁵ words.

I will omit some parts of the text relating to some of the research statistics. We will read it in chunks so that my students have an opportunity to take in the material and understand it before moving on with the reading. “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” offers exposure to an argument which my students are asked to write. It talks about mind-set and how one can determine their success by choosing the correct mind-set. My students will create a mind-map in order to organize the information presented in the argument, and they will write an argument paragraph on a topic that is important to them.

Every class ends with *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson. Although this reading does not ask the students to write about themselves and others, it does promote their thinking about themselves or others who may have experienced situations similar to the main character. The fact that the main character of this novel develops her voice through art may give my English learners motivation to find their voice. Anderson has a knack for making her novels relatable. Meeting Anderson in 2002 while working at an all-girls middle and high school enabled me to experience her genuineness. I bought into her passion for telling the stories of young people. Generally, I read the novel, and the students follow along. This novel is on the district’s vetted book list. *Speak* is the story of Melinda Sordino, a ninth grader who at a summer party before 9th grade begins is raped by a popular upper classman. When Melinda calls the police, she is unable to complete the 911 call and suffers the wrath of her friends for alerting the police which further forces to keep her secret. Her parents are living separately but in the same house, so Melinda feels that she has no support there. She spends the year developing her voice so that she can eventually confront her attacker and win back the support of her friends. The book is divided into marking periods and follows Melinda from the first day of ninth grade to the last day of ninth grade. I have had success using this text in both 10th and 12th grade college preparatory classrooms populated with native speakers. The students in those classes really bought into this reading activity; they could relate to the characters and the situations. I thought this story would be relatable for my ELs as well. I like to read with and to my students; I feel that this practice is a way for my students to learn to read expressively. It is also a way that I can share something I love with people who mean a great deal to me. We will watch the movie as we go, using Spanish subtitles for newcomers.

Teaching Strategies

Previewing

Students will preview all texts read in the Unit. This strategy will help activate prior knowledge and relate the material to the students' lives. By looking at the pictures, reading the captions, noticing the text, students will be introduced to the concepts within; this will engage student motivation. After we preview the text, students can ask questions and make predictions. We will revisit the predictions after reading.

Close Reading

“Close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, etc.”⁶ Close reading will help my English Learners interact with the difficult text they are reading which is written in their L2. I expect that the more I use Close reading activities with my students when we read the two nonfiction selections “Kewauna’s Ambition” and “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids,” the more comfortable they will become marking up the text and understanding what they are reading/seeing.

Adapting the Text

I was introduced to the strategy of Adapting the Text by Dr. Barbara Prillaman in a graduate class. When Dr. Prillaman presented the strategy, I learned a powerful tool I could use with my English Learners in all content areas. I felt justified to change a difficult task because I was not changing the main ideas of the text, I was making it digestible for my students, promoting their learning. I will summarize some of information and reduce some of the reading of “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids.” I will restate some of the statistics and study information in a way that my students can relate to it.

Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a postreading strategy that allows a student to make sense of what they read. I have used mind mapping for years as an alternative to traditional note taking and outlining. It offers students who don't buy into these traditional practices a way to record and organize information they encounter. Students take information presented and create an organized understanding of that material. “Mapping is a powerful strategy for assisting students with organizing and remembering information they have read. After reading a content area piece, it is important for students to summarize or re-present the information

in order to retain it to memory.”⁷ I will model the strategy as we map a character’s recipe for success and then the student’s own recipe.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers will guide my students’ collection of ideas needed for the writing and interviewing they will do in this unit. I will employ the use of the Venn diagram with the lesson relating to the podcast. Students will record similarities and differences in their story of chasing success and Alvarez’s story. Students will use planning documents/prewriting sheets to plan their argument writing with the nonfiction text, “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” and their personal narrative that will follow the reading of “A Walk to the Jetty.” The planning document for the argument will include: Topic, Audience, Claim, Purpose, and three Supporting Details. The personal narrative would be divided into Beginning, Middle, and End with instructions for content in each section. They will receive a blank form for the friendly letter which will establish the date, the greeting, the salutation, the body, and the closing.

Vocabulary

Preteaching vocabulary is very important for English Learners. Many of them come to U.S. Schools lacking the vocabulary knowledge that most U.S. students have acquired by middle school. The 4-fold vocabulary organizer is helpful to language learners because it relates the new word learned to a word in the student’s L1. This is another tool I learned from Dr. Prillaman. After I select the vocabulary, I will introduce the words to my students. They will echo me as I pronounce the words, and then they will record them in the first box of the fold. We will define the words together, using the Learner’s Dictionary. We will include part of speech, syllables, and the word in their home language. I will give the students many chances to practice using the words, and will test the knowledge formatively and summatively. These chances for practice include: using pictures to reinforce the word’s meanings when possible, concentration games, and gallery walks.

Choral Reading and Echo Reading

English Learners need opportunities to practice their oral fluency. They will get these opportunities by presenting their interviews, their poems, their mind maps, and discussing the readings. Another way that they will strengthen their fluency is by engaging in the

Choral reading of *Speak*. We will practice choral reading using short passages from the novel. Subjects such as changing classes, coming late to class, or sitting for a pep rally are good choices to use for the choral reading because the students engage in these types of school activities; they are relatable and reinforce the concept that other characters and people walk the same path as my students. I experienced a great deal of success using choral reading with my native speakers. I used this strategy to engage my reluctant readers and promote enthusiasm for the text. While I was in a graduate class with Nigel Caplan, I created a lesson using choral reading and echo reading. Nigel encouraged the use of these strategies with English learners. I will use echo readings of short passages from the fiction and nonfiction curriculum texts as well as passages from the novel.

Read-Alouds

Reading aloud to young children promotes their literacy. Many of my English learners come to my classroom lacking literacy in the first language (L1), so it is necessary to use strategies that may seem elementary. Reading aloud to someone at any age is a joyful experience and one worth sharing. Reading aloud creates bonds, and bonds strengthen a person. I will use Read-Alouds of *Speak* in an effort to promote the L2 literacy of my students and to develop a bond with them.

Classroom Lessons

Lesson One: Nonfiction/Fiction Poetry Writing

To begin the unit, students will write an “I Am” poem. This activity will allow the students to begin thinking about who they are, where they are from, and what things are important to them. They will see themselves on paper, something that could be very powerful for them, igniting their confidence.

An “I Am” poem is a simple tool for students to generate ideas about their individuality. It is a three-stanza, 18-line poem in which the author lists characteristics, hopes, dreams, fears, etc. Sentence starters are provided. The students complete each line. I would translate for a newcomer and allow him or her to write in their L1. Together or as a class, we could translate into English.

I will introduce the activity on the Smartboard and model it for my students using a pad and an easel. We will talk about any questions they have. They will have a chance to complete the poem. After they have finished, they will present their poems to each other in their L1 or L2 whichever is more comfortable. If they have written the poem using their L2, I will ask the group to help me translate the poem into English.

We will end the activity by presenting our poems. Again, I will model by presenting the poem I wrote. Individually, the students will present their poems. Newcomers may use their L1 if they would like. I will eventually return to the activity and ask them to present the poem in English. This will lead us into the introduction of the Collection title “Chasing Success.” I will present an overview of the unit: the readings, the activities, and what I hope to gain from the unit.

Lesson Two: “A Walk to the Jetty” by Jamaica Kincaid

The prereading strategy I will begin with is the 4-Fold Vocabulary organizer. I will present the story vocabulary (three words) along with four more words I believe my English learners will need to know, as well as, the literary terms necessary for understanding that are presented along with the story. The students and I will use Chromebooks and the Learner’s Dictionary to write the words with an indication of syllables, define the words, and record the part of speech.

A second prereading strategy I will use is previewing the text. The students and I will walk through the text, examining the pictures of the jetty, the yellow house, and the church. We will make predictions about the story based on these pictures. Next, students will be given a “Walk to the Jetty” Reader’s Guide (Reader’s Guide) to use with the story. On the first page of the Reader’s Guide, students will examine a map depicting the Caribbean Sea and the islands and land surrounding it. Students will connect to the setting of the story by using the map to determine the name of the island where the main character begins her journey and the name of the country where they began their journey.

During reading, the students will use the Reader’s Guide to record character names and other elements relating to the plot of the story. The literary terms defined in the 4-Fold vocabulary sheet will be analyzed and practiced. Newcomers will receive information in both the L1 and L2; the L1 will be discussed and written alongside the information written in the L2.

After reading, students will complete two writing activities that will ask the students to write about themselves and others. These activities will allow my students to further connect to the material by writing a letter using the main character's point of view to her mother. Newcomers may write the letter in their L1. Next, they will create a personal narrative retelling about an important event in their life. They will use a planning document which outlines the beginning, middle, and end. Students will be prompted to include the people involved, introduce the setting, and explain the situation. They will use time order words to present the events. They will also be asked to share feelings and thoughts through details and dialogue.

Lesson Three - Close Read of "Kewauna's Ambition" by Paul Tough

The second text of the Unit is found in the *Close Reader* workbook, an accessory to the *Collections* text. I will use the 4-Fold Vocabulary organizer with the two vocabulary words and the one literary term associated with this text. We will practice pronunciation, use the Chromebook and the Learner's dictionary to write the words with an indication of syllables, define them, record part of speech, and indicate similar word in their L1.

We will preview the text, looking at the picture of a girl holding books, reading the prompts, and making a prediction. Together we will read through the text and follow the prompts that ask us to cite specific textual evidence, write notes, discuss ideas presented, and summarize information. Students will further connect with this text by constructing a list of ways that they can improve their grades. They will model their list on the Kewauna's practices, but it should reflect their needs. Newcomers may write the list in their L1. Students will share their list using their L2 (Newcomers could choose one item and practice using their L2) with a partner and make any addition of subtractions as needed. Follow up could include a revisiting of the list at the end of the marking period to determine its effectiveness.

Lesson Four - a visit to StoryCorps

We will take a break from the district curriculum to explore where we came from and the power of the spoken word. We will listen to a mother and daughter from the Alvarez family discuss their family's account of "Chasing Success." Students will listen to the podcast as they follow along with the transcript. Students will create a Venn diagram and record similarities and differences between their story of chasing success and the Alvarez's story. After a class discussion of the information in the Venn diagrams, students will determine whom they will interview and make a plan to conduct the

interview. They will create a podcast on the iPad or their cell phone using the Storycorps's app. They may choose to interview a family member, another student in the school, or a classmate. If the person they interview does not speak the L2, the student could present the interview as it is and the class could translate the interview into the L2.

Lesson Five - Close Read of "The Secret to Raising Smart Kids" by Carol S. Dweck

Students will complete a 4-Fold Vocabulary organizer for terms associated with argument writing. Ethos, Pathos, and Logos will be discussed and defined. The structure of the argument will be discussed prior to reading using simple logic such as conducting a survey of who likes vanilla ice cream better than chocolate or chocolate ice cream better than vanilla.

The students will have a photocopy of the text and some parts with some parts simplified to reduce some of the statistics/facts/difficult Tier 3 vocabulary. During reading, students will employ the use of a mind map that will help them organize the information presented and help them comprehend it.

After reading, students will complete a graphic organizer that will help them decide their topic, identify their audience, present their claim, their purpose, and allow them to offer three supportive reasons. They will research information using their Chromebooks and then construct an argumentative paragraph that will effectively state a worthy (important to them) claim that is well-supported by their reasons (evidence/research).

Appendix A: Standards

This unit will implement several Common Core State Standards and one English Language Development Standard. CCRL.1 and CCRI.1 state, "Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain." The standard for reading literature is addressed when the students read "A Walk to the Jetty" in Lesson two. I will ask them direct questions about the text checking for comprehension and ask them to infer ideas about the text based on their prior knowledge and experience. The standard for reading informational text is addressed the students read "Kewauna's Ambition" and "The Secret to Raising Smart Kids." Direct questions relating to the texts

will determine student comprehension and prior knowledge and experience will guide students to make inferences with regards to these texts.

CCRL.2 and CCRI.2 state, “Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.” This standard is addressed when students discuss the characters found in “A Walk to the Jetty,” “Kewauna’s Ambition,” and “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids.” Students will interact with the texts and relate to them in order to gain insight into the motivation of the characters.

CCW.3 states, “Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.” This standard for writing is addressed when my students write their personal narratives describing their journeys.

CCSL.1.C states, “Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.” This standard for speaking and listening is addressed when my students prepare interview questions, conduct the interviews with their family members, and record those interviews in a podcast.

CCSL.1.D states, “Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.” This standard for speaking and listening is addressed when my students conduct their interviews.

EL.K12.LA.1 states, “English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.” This English Language Development standard is addressed in the writing and speaking activities associated with the unit.

Notes

- ¹ ReadWriteThink - ReadWriteThink. Accessed November 25, 2019. http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson391/I-am-poem.pdf.
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