

TASK 1: PLANNING COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 11 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

1. Central Focus

- a. Describe the central focus and purpose for the content you will teach in the learning segment.

[The central focus for this learning segment is comprehension. The purpose for this learning segment is to activate prior knowledge and for students to become comfortable with story elements by listening, predicting, identifying, responding, and creating. In doing this, students will make real world and personal connections with the text.]

- b. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning targets within your learning segment address
 - an essential literacy strategy
 - requisite skills that support use of the strategy
 - reading/writing connections

[An essential literacy strategy for this learning segment is identifying story elements, character traits, and themes, which is all a part of the central focus: comprehension. The standard and learning target for the first lesson address the use of words students are familiar to describe, compare, and contrast friends and enemies, which is the theme of the story and learning segment. A necessary requisite skill is understanding vocabulary meaning in context. This skill supports the use of the literacy strategy in all three parts of the learning segment as students listen and respond in different ways to the story, building their ability to recognize words, identify story elements such as characters, setting, problem, etc., which is part of the standard and target of the second lesson. Students will collaborate to write a continuation of the story in the learning target of the third lesson. This builds reading/writing connections as the students will now respond to the reading by collaboratively writing their own continuation of the story.]

- c. Explain how your plans build on each other to help students **make connections** between skills and the essential strategy to comprehend **OR** compose text in meaningful contexts.

[The purpose of centering this learning segment around one book and one theme is to create a natural building of comprehension, skills, and strategy with each lesson. In the first lesson, students describe friends and enemies by comparing and contrasting them using adjectives they are already familiar with. Then they connect this skill with the theme of the book as they listen to the teacher read the first half of *Enemy Pie*. In the second lesson, students must remember which story elements they already know from the book and what they are still wondering. After organizing their thoughts in a K-W-L chart, they are able to listen to the second half of the story with greater comprehension and anticipation to complete the “L” column of the K-W-L chart. Students must use vocabulary in the correct context as they complete their story element summary as well. In the third and final lesson, students make connections between reading and writing, building on the same skills and sticking with the character traits and themes of friends by writing a collaborative continuation of the story *Enemy Pie*.]

- d. How and when will you give students opportunities to express their understanding of the learning targets and why they are important to learn?

[Students will have the opportunity to express their understanding of the learning target and why they are important after the opening activity of each lesson after the teacher has introduced it and highlighted the academic language. Students will have the opportunity to read it aloud together and share it with their neighbor. Then again, at the conclusion of the lesson, students will have the opportunity to read it to themselves again, share it with a neighbor, and determine how close they felt they got to the bullseye on the target. Twice in the lesson will students have opportunity to express understanding of the learning target. The teacher will also review the learning target at various times throughout the lesson.]

2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a–b), describe what you know about **your** students **with respect to the central focus** of the learning segment.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

- a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—**Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

[This class as a whole is weak in both reading and writing. Aside from four students who are at or exceeding grade-level expectation, the other twelve are approaching second grade expectations and need support or not yet meeting at all and need continuous support. These students need to have skills taught more than once for the information and abilities to really become known to them. For this reason, I taught the students the skill of comparing and contrasting in science using a Venn Diagram the previous week so that it would be a review and they would thoroughly understand the skill for this beginning of this learning segment. It is a significant help to link all new lessons with the students' prior academic learning (Dewey, 1938/1998) so they have a base of knowledge to build onto for any new material. Students do very well with verbally communicating and love to share in discussions, but when it comes to writing their ideas down, they need much assistance. The students are still learning to construct sentences and comprehend and apply information in meaningful contexts.]

- b. Personal/cultural/community assets related to the central focus—**What do you know about your students' everyday experiences, cultural backgrounds and practices, and interests?**

[Most of the students in this class come from supportive, Christian, two-parent homes. Eleven out of the sixteen are the eldest sibling in the family and spend time playing with younger siblings at home after school regularly. Three students come from broken homes and are raised much of the time by grandparents or aunts. This affects their academic progress and behavior greatly. Two of these students struggle with reading, writing, and emotional behavior. The advanced student moved from New Zealand this year, where she was academically excelling and was involved in differentiated and advanced school work for all subjects. Her strongest subject is literacy. She has an older brother who she looks up to and tries to keep up with in reading. The student with hearing loss moved from Jamaica 5 years ago and has great difficulty paying attention, so his comprehension levels are often lower than grade level expectation. He has an educational assistant who comes in two or three times a week to help him focus.

The majority of the class is caucasian with the exception of two students whose families are from Jamaica and one student whose family is from Albania. Outside of school, most of the

class' main interests include computer and gaming technology, playing with peers, church activities, swimming, and outdoor activities.]

3. Supporting Students' Literacy Learning

Respond to prompts 3a–d below. To support your justifications, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Task 1. In addition, **use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations.**

- a. Justify how your understanding of your students' prior academic learning and personal/cultural/community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students' prior academic learning, assets, and research/theory.

[My understanding of the students' everyday experiences and prior academic knowledge heavily influenced my choice and adaptation of the learning tasks and materials. I chose to center my learning segment around the book, *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson because I knew the students would relate with the main character. He is about their age, lives in a neighborhood similar to their own, has similar interests, and deals with similar issues as these children do. In the case of this book, the issue is what to do about enemies, or people we don't like. Most of these students come from Christian families and have supportive parents that are similar to the dad in the story of *Enemy Pie*. The theme of the Golden Rule, "Treat others the way you would like to be treated" is even intertwined in the message of this book. This is a relevant and appropriate topic for character development in the primary grades.

School, family, and community connections are important and valuable to student learning (Banks, 2009; Meyers, 1993). A letter will be sent home to inform the parents about the theme of this unit and to encourage them to talk about it with their children. This is a topic that parents generally support and appreciate being taught at school. This parent letter keeps the parents in the loop about their child's education, connecting the parent to the learning segment.

My knowledge of the students also impacted my choice of learning tasks and materials. The students become very excited whenever there is an engaging activity in the lesson. I ensured that there was an engaging activity for the opening of each lesson. In lesson 1, I will dress up as a chef and show them yucky things to put in an enemy pie. I will also give them a chance to share their ideas of yucky things to put in a pie, as I know they love to share. In lesson 2, I will open with a brief review quiz to let them demonstrate their comprehension and memory from the lesson the day before. I also know they are very motivated by earning points for their groups, so this provides a great way to win group points. In lesson 3, I will give them the opportunity to discuss in their groups what they think will happen now that Jeremy Ross and the boy are friends (story extension).

Finally, when choosing materials and learning tasks, I chose graphic organizers that the students were either familiar with or ready for. Lesson 1's literacy strategy is a Venn Diagram (Venn, 1880). The Venn Diagram's purpose is to provide a clear, visual Graphic Organizer. Visual organization is very helpful to this particular group of students because they do well when they have a structured way of demonstrating their knowledge. I chose to complete some of the learning tasks together as the students need extra support writing and spelling. For the gifted student who loves to write and be a helper, I planned extra writing for her and will give her higher expectations in the learning tasks we do together as a class. These learning task/literacy strategies are described in greater detail below in 3b.]

- b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for **the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs.**

Consider students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

[This class as a whole is behind in reading and writing. Therefore, the planned instructional strategies and supports are methods they are familiar with from prior learning. The students' prior academic learning and capabilities guided my choice and adaptation of learning tasks and materials. The students have recently completed a second grade reader called *Owl at Home* by Arnold Lobel. 70% of the class really struggled in sounding out words and were not meeting grade level expectations in their fluency and expression. Approximately nine of the sixteen students struggled to complete the comprehension worksheet packet, needing significant amounts of assistance.

Because this was our most recent literacy unit, I chose to adapt the instruction of this learning segment so that I would read a story to them, demonstrating fluency and expression and they could, in turn, demonstrate their comprehension using various language supports and strategies such as the Venn Diagram (Venn, 1880) and K-W-L charts (Ogle, 1986). All along, students will benefit by developing fluency and expression by listening as well as demonstrating comprehension in oral discussions, quizzes, and written assessments. The student with hearing loss will have an educational assistant to help him keep focused and stay on task. The gifted student will have the task of demonstrating deeper knowledge by adding on to written assessments in the form of extra sentences, terms, ideas, or assignments depending on the lesson.

The first lesson's learning task is comparing and contrasting using a Venn Diagram (Venn, 1880). Students understand the concept of comparing and contrasting, so using this tool will be an asset to building onto their prior knowledge and introducing the theme of friendship for this learning segment. The learning segment strategy developed by (Pearson, 2013), is a short unit based on one theme with a central focus and multiple learning strategies. The learning tasks in the second lesson are completing a K-W-L chart and a graphic organizer (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, Joshi, 2007) to summarize the story elements. Students are very competent with expressing what they know in their own words as a part of class discussions regularly. So, the K-W-L chart will provide a way for them to organize what they already know about the book, what they are still wondering, and, what they've learned. The students are familiar with the terms, "setting, characters, plot, and solution" from other literature studies, so this learning task will be appropriately linked to their prior knowledge and even form some valuable review. The third lesson's learning task is writing a collaborative story using valid predictions and inferences when building off of each other's ideas. This learning task is designed specifically for this class of struggling writers as they have great ideas, but not the skill or capabilities of writing their ideas down yet. The teacher will provide guidance and support by typing out their story as they suggest ideas and construct sentences. Students know how to make sentences and they know the necessary elements of a story (characters, setting, problem, and solution) so this activity, though new, is building off of prior academic learning (Dewey, 1938/1998). Since the activity is writing a continuation of the story *Enemy Pie*, the characters and setting are already in place and the students must come up with a problem and a solution.

My planned strategy for collecting student voice is designed specifically for this class as they respond well to visual aids and struggle to write ideas on their own. To collect student voice at the end of each lesson, I have created small, individual target boards. The students will get to color in a dot on the bullseye or one of the outer rings demonstrating how close to the learning target they feel they got. The students will be shown the learning target rubric which lets them know what the expectations are for each color/ring. The rubric will always be on the board for them to look at. This strategy is appropriate for the whole class because it is simple to complete, yet the advanced student and the struggling writers alike can complete it without too much work.

This lets them express their understanding to me in a way that is fun at the conclusion of each lesson.]

- c. How will students identify resources to support their progress toward the learning targets?

[Students will identify resources to support their progress toward the learning target by adding new vocabulary words (academic language introduced) into their personal dictionaries. They are encouraged to talk about their learning targets with their parents at home and welcomed to ask questions during class to further their learning. Students are encouraged to use their buddies in their group as resources too. Working together to sound words out or brainstorm ideas is a valuable skill to develop.

The assessment worksheet booklets act as resources to support students as they work towards the learning target as well. The worksheets should remind the students of what they learned, why they learned it, and what the target was for that day. The students are familiar with the layout of the school and know they can check out books from the library or the classroom library on the same theme of the learning segment. The students are encouraged to use these resources on a regular basis throughout the day at appointed times as well as after school.]

- d. Describe common developmental approximations or common misconceptions within your literacy central focus and how you will address them.

[To address common developmental approximations within the literacy central focus of comprehension, I will read the main literature to the students. Since this age group and this class still has to sound out many words, comprehension is a great effort when reading. To address this, I plan to read the book to the students so they may focus on the comprehension aspect. To assist students in reading and spelling in their learning tasks and assessments, I will read the questions to them and work with the class as a whole on the whiteboard to get them going. I will explain the meaning of the difficult vocabulary words and place these words on the white board for the students to have a visual representation and a resource to refer to.]

4. Supporting Literacy Development Through Language

- a. **Language Function.** Identify **one** language function essential for students to develop and practice the literacy strategy within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment:

Analyze	Argue	Categorize	Compare/contrast	Describe	Explain
Interpret	Predict	Question	Retell	Summarize	

[One language function that is essential for students to develop and practice within this learning segment is to predict.]

- b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function in ways that support the essential strategy. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[Students will be encouraged to orally predict what will happen in the story of *Enemy Pie* multiple times throughout the learning segment. However, predicting will be specifically emphasized in Lesson 3/Day 3 where the task is to predict what will happen now that Jeremy Ross and the boy are friends and write a continuation to the story of *Enemy Pie*. The students will **predict**, infer, and collaborate to create a continuation of *Enemy Pie*.

The students will demonstrate reading comprehension and inferential skills by “adding on” to a collaborative story. This task is a collaborative one, but the students must use their knowledge

of the story elements (essential strategy) and the correct vocabulary in context (literacy skill) in order to make appropriate and relevant predictions. The predictions they make are based on what they know of the characters, the setting, and the plot already.]

- c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use:

- Vocabulary or key phrases
- **Plus** at least one of the following:
 - Syntax
 - Discourse

Consider the range of students' understandings of the language function and other language demands—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

[Through the language function of “predict,” which is a critical part of the learning task in Lesson three, the students will be lead to the other academic language for the learning task. The students have three new vocabulary words to learn to fully grasp the learning target of this lesson and comprehend their task. The vocabulary students need to understand for the learning task in the third lesson are below. The teacher will introduce each new word near the beginning of the lesson and review the words at the end. The language demands and terms with syntax are as follows:

Students must know what the word **collaborate** means in order to work together and fulfill the learning target. The students need to know what **predicting** and **inferring** are since those are the tools they will be using to reason what will happen next in the story.

- **Collaborate** (syntax): To work together towards the same goal.
- **Predict** (syntax): To guess what might happen based on what you know already.
- **Infer** (syntax): To use reasoning skills to decide why something might happen or why something already happened.

All academic language needed for the lesson is new and will be discussed orally. Students will review the language as a class. For example, in lesson 3, I will ask the students what it means to predict. They will answer using discourse based on their prior knowledge and from context clues. I will also ask students what they think it means to collaborate. After hearing their guesses, I will read them the definitions and provide examples. In this specific lesson, I will make a rhythm out of the three vocabulary words and have the students chant it with me: “Predict-Infer-Coll-a-bor-ate, Predict- Infer-Coll-a-bor-ate.” All academic language will be understood before moving into the learning task. These terms are things that the students will all be actively participating in throughout the lesson.]

- d. **Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.
- Describe the instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) that help students understand and successfully use the language function and additional language demands identified in prompts 4a–c.

[For each lesson, the academic language will be written on the whiteboard so the students can reference the definitions as a resource at any time throughout the lesson. The learning target will be written on the board for each lesson so the students can also reference that throughout the instruction time and work time. There will be three learning target rubrics on the whiteboard, which will show the students where they should be aiming for and how they measure where

they landed at the end of the lesson. In the learning task described in prompts 4a-c, the teacher will be a major support in helping students successfully use the language function, predict, properly. The students will be actively predicting as they suggest sentences for the collaborative story. The teacher will be guiding and assisting them in their sentence construction and predictions.]

5. Monitoring Student Learning

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Task 1.

- a. Describe how your planned formal and informal assessments will provide direct evidence for you and your students to monitor their essential literacy strategy **AND** requisite skills to comprehend or compose text **throughout** the learning segment.

[In lesson 1, students will complete a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast friends and enemies. The Venn Diagram will be an informal assessment for class participation and comprehension. The teacher will assess students throughout the lesson orally through brainstorming during the literacy strategy and by observation of pairs working together to complete the comprehension assessment. The students will have achieved the Learning Target when they have identified words, phrases, and adjectives to compare and contrast friends and enemies as well as complete a comprehension worksheet with a partner on the first part of *Enemy Pie* with at least 80% accuracy. The comprehension worksheet will be the formal assessment for this lesson.

In lesson 2, The students will identify what they already know, what they want to know, and what they learned from the story *Enemy Pie* by completing a K-W-L chart and creating a summary of the story with 80% accuracy. During the opening activity and the literacy strategy, the teacher will assess the students' comprehension orally. Students will participate orally in the opening challenge quiz as well as the K-W-L chart. The K-W-L chart will be assessed for comprehension and participation since it was done together as a class. The formal assessment will be the summary worksheet which the students will do on their own, with the exception of asking their group members for help spelling a word or coming up with a good sentence. The students will have achieved the Learning Target when they have identified what they already know, what they want to know, and what they learned from the story *Enemy Pie* by completing the K-W-L chart and filled out a summary of the story with 80% accuracy.

In lesson 3, the students will demonstrate reading comprehension and inferential skills by “adding on” to a collaborative story. As they contribute ideas and sentences, the teacher will mark the names of students down next to their personal contribution. In addition, the students will draw a picture of a scene from the story continuation and be responsible for writing a caption. This picture and caption will be the formal assessment of the students' comprehension of the story they participated in writing. The picture and caption will not only demonstrate the students' understanding and participation in their collaborative story, but it will reflect on their comprehension of the story elements of *Enemy Pie*. The students will have reached the learning target when they have successfully demonstrated reading comprehension and inferential skills by “adding on” to a collaborative story. The students will also demonstrate they have reached the learning target by predicting and inferencing appropriate emotions/reactions of characters and using descriptive language and supporting details in the writing process.]

- b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

Consider all students, including students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

[The design of my planned assessments allows the struggling readers, the advanced student, and the student with loss of hearing to demonstrate their learning. Three of the five worksheets will be done 80% as a class so that the struggling readers and writers can present their ideas, participate in class discussion, but also have the guidance they need to complete the worksheet by looking up at the board to write down the ideas. The worksheets are straightforward and basic for the students to show the teacher their participation and understanding of the learning target and comprehension of the reading. In group discussions, the teacher will call on the student with hearing loss specifically to answer a question. This helps him to be involved in class discussions. It helps him to copy off the board as he is not yet capable of generating an answer in his head and writing it down.

The advanced student knows that if she does not have her own specific differentiated assignment, she is expected to show deeper understanding by adding on to what is expected by the other students. In the Venn Diagram, for example, she will add in at least 3 of her own adjectives or phrases to compare and contrast friends and enemies. In the second lesson, she has a differentiated assignment to write her own summary of the story using the story elements the class filled in on the graphic organizer.

The planned assessment for the end of each lesson is the individual learning target board. This is to collect student voice. Each student will have his or her own to put a dot in at the end of each lesson. This was designed with the struggling writers in mind so they could have a time of self-reflection at the end of each lesson without having to do more writing. This lets students with specific needs demonstrate their learning to me. It also lets them assess their own learning in a fun way.]

- c. Describe when and where you will elicit student voice (oral or written) during instruction to raise awareness in both you and the students of where students are relative to the learning targets.

[Student voice will be elicited orally at the beginning of the lesson after the opening activity when the teacher introduces the reading target for new learning. At this time, students will repeat target after the teacher, say it together, and say it to each other. The teacher may ask questions for the students throughout the lesson about how things relate to the target and raise awareness throughout the lesson of how the instruction and materials are pointing to knowledge of the learning target. At the conclusion of the lesson, students are reminded of the learning target and how to measure whether they reached the bullseye or were not quite there yet. Students each have a personal color-coded and laminated target with a bullseye and three rings that they put their mark on where they think they reached by the end of the lesson. The teacher will emphasize the importance of honestly marking down where they feel they are so the teacher can best help them onward from there. The mark on the students' target demonstrates to them and to the teacher where they feel they are relative to the learning target.]

- d. What tools and strategies will students use to monitor their own learning process during the learning segment?

[All of the assessment activities are put into a booklet that is stapled together. First the Venn Diagram, next the part one comprehension worksheet, then the K-W-L, followed by the story elements summary organizer, and last, the illustration and caption worksheet. (The advanced student has an extra page for her own summary writing. Having all the worksheets together in a packet allows the students to monitor their own learning in a unit. This is a technique we use regularly for units or learning segments so the students can look back, see what they did they did the day before and be reminded of the information they learned and tasks they completed.

Students will be able to monitor their progress by looking back, looking ahead, and assessing their development.

The main strategy that students will use to monitor their progress during the learning segment is the personal learning targets that they will mark each day to show how close they got to the bullseye. The target rubric is as follows: 4- (bullseye) I really understand and I'm ready to move on! 3- (blue) I understand and I've got it. 2- (orange) I sort of understand, but I need some help. 1- (green) I'm lost and I don't understand. I need help. This target and rubric lets them and their teacher know where they need more assistance and review.]