Standards Aligned Writing in the Elementary Grades

Leadership II - Grades K–5 - Day 1
I feel like a visitor in my own school—that hasn’t changed,” Samantha said, confusion and despair in her voice. We were at the tail end of a focus group discussion with African American students at Green Hills High, a predominantly white, economically diverse school. We had been invited to conduct an equity assessment, examining the extent to which Green Hills was an equitable learning environment for all. We had asked Samantha and a small group of her classmates how they would characterize their school’s two-year-old Multicultural Curriculum Initiative, touted by school administrators as a comprehensive effort to infuse a multicultural perspective into all aspects of school life.

“I’m invisible,” Sean added, “but also hypervisible. Maybe twice a year there’s a program about somebody’s food or music, but that’s about it. I don’t see the purpose.”

Then Cynthia, who had remained quiet through most of the hourlong discussion, slammed her fist on the table, exclaiming, “That multicultural initiative means nothing. There’s racism at this school, and nobody’s doing anything about it!”

We found ourselves only a few moments later in our next scheduled focus group, surrounded by the school’s power brokers: the principal, assistant principals, deans, and department chairs. Still taken—maybe even a little shaken—by what we had heard from the young women and men who felt fairly powerless at Green Hills, we asked the administrators about the purpose of the Multicultural Curriculum Initiative.

After a brief silence, Jonathan, the principal, leaned back in his chair. “They said what?” he asked, before interrupting a member of his leadership team who had begun to defend the initiative. “Maybe it’s time to rethink this.”

Schools can commit to a more robust multiculturalism by putting equity, rather than culture, at the center of the diversity conversation.

Equity Literacy for All

Paul C. Gorski and Katy Swalwell

Beyond Artwork and Celebrations

If we’ve learned anything working with schools across the United States, it’s this: When it comes to education equity, the trouble is not a lack of
multicultural programs or diversity initiatives in schools. Nor is it necessarily a lack of educators who, like Jonathan, appreciate and even champion diversity. In virtually every school we visit, we see attempts at multiculturalism: corridors lined with flags, student-designed posters representing the national or ethnic origins of families in the community, anti-bullying programs, or faculty positions like “Diversity Director.”

The trouble lies in how so many diversity initiatives avoid or whitewash serious equity issues. It lies in the space between what marginalized students like Cynthia say their schools need to do to help them feel less marginalized and what many of the adults in those schools are comfortable doing in the name of multiculturalism.

To better grasp this, put yourself in Cynthia’s shoes. Imagine a world in which, as a result of something over which you have no control—say, your racial identity, sexual orientation, or home language—you’re made to feel alienated or invisible at school. Imagine that when you occasionally see little shimmers of yourself reflected in the curriculum, your identity or culture is reduced to a stereotype—to a sari, taco, or polka. Imagine the
The illusion of multicultural learning even as they guarantee a lack of sophisticated multicultural learning.

What we are suggesting is that at the heart of a curriculum that is meaningfully multicultural lie principles of equity and social justice—purposeful attention to issues like racism, homophobia, sexism, and economic inequality. Without this core, what we do in the name of multiculturalism can border on exploitative: asking students and families who experience these inequalities to allow students and families who don’t experience them to grow their knowledge, while the inequalities themselves go unaddressed. There’s racism at this school, and nobody’s doing anything about it!

Overcoming the “Culture” Fetish
In her article, “It’s Not the Culture of Poverty, It’s the Poverty of Culture,” Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) explains how culture fetishism undermines education equity. “Culture,” she explains, “is randomly and regularly used to explain everything” (p. 104). It’s used, in effect, as a stand-in for race, class, language, and other issues that aren’t as comfortably discussed as broad, vague “cultures.”

Many of the most popular frameworks for creating more inclusive classrooms and curriculums continue this culture fetish. In addition to multiculturalism, we have intercultural and cross-cultural education, cultural competence and cultural proficiency, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching. And despite the fact that social scientists debunked the concept in the early 1970s, the “culture of poverty” remains the dominant framework in U.S. education circles for understanding the lives of low-income students.

Of course, some focus on culture is warranted. Culture is an important aspect of student experience to consider in efforts to create a meaningfully multicultural curriculum and a more equitable school. Moreover, some of these frameworks, including cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness, are rooted in principles of equity (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The challenge is to retain principles of equity as central aspects of a multicultural curriculum that is truly meaningful, even if—especially if—it feels easier or safer to home in on more simplistic notions of culture.

Embracing Equity Literacy
In our own teaching, as well as in our work with schools and school districts, we embrace a framework for both multicultural curriculum development and bigger efforts to create equitable classrooms and schools. We call this framework equity literacy. Its central tenet is that any meaningful approach to diversity or multiculturalism relies more on teachers’ understandings of equity and inequity and of justice and injustice than on their understanding of this or that culture (Gorski, 2013). It relies, as well, on teachers’ abilities to cultivate in students a robust understanding about how people are treated by one another and by institutions, in addition to a general appreciation of diversity (Swalwell, 2011). The idea is to place equity, rather than culture, at the center of the diversity conversation.

Key to developing equity literacy for educators and students is cultivating...
These four abilities (Gorski, 2013). These include the ability to
- **Recognize** even subtle forms of bias, discrimination, and inequity.
- **Respond** to bias, discrimination, and inequity in a thoughtful and equitable manner.
- **Redress** bias, discrimination, and inequity, not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also by studying the ways in which bigger social change happens.
- **Cultivate and sustain** bias-free and discrimination-free communities, which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone in a civil society.

Part of the difficulty with implementing a curriculum that grows these abilities in young people is that we educators must first grow them in ourselves. We might start by ensuring that professional development related to multiculturalism focuses not only on cultural competence or diversity awareness, but also on recognizing sexism and ableism, for example; not on a mythical “culture of poverty,” but on responding to economic inequality; and not on how to help marginalized students fit into school cultures they experience as alienating, but on how to redress the alienation by making changes in our own practices and policies.

We recognize this is a daunting task, and we understand the pressure of feeling *here’s one more thing I need to squeeze into an already packed workday*. But then we remember Cynthia’s exhortation: “There’s racism at this school, and nobody’s doing anything about it!” We don’t have control over everything, but to the extent that we do influence the curriculum, we feel an urgency to avoid the kind of well-intended complacency we found at Green Hills High.

The good news is that there are many powerful models for what an equity literacy curriculum looks like in practice (see “Great Equity Literacy Resources,” p. 39). Teacher-led organizations around the United States have developed rich databases of curriculums that can (and should) be modified for local contexts. Nobody needs to start from scratch.

**Five Guiding Principles**

It can be difficult to paint a precise picture of what an equity literacy curriculum looks like because, like all curriculums, it will look different depending on contextual factors. What we can say is that, rather than a list of facts or historical figures that everyone should know (as in E. D. Hirsch’s “cultural literacy” lists), an equity literacy curriculum focuses on essential questions like these: What makes something equitable or inequitable? What (local, regional, global) inequities exist? How have they changed over time, and why? What individual and collective responsibilities do we have to address them? These questions require both evidence and ethics to debate. They fit well with the inquiry approach to education promoted by recent curriculum frameworks, such as the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) framework.

As we plan curriculum for our students and work to develop our own skills and knowledge related to equity literacy, it’s useful to keep the following five principles in mind.

**Principle 1. Equity literacy is important in every subject area.** When we teach with and for equity literacy, we’re not abandoning content. Rather, we’re teaching content (when feasible) through an equity lens. One of our favorite resources for teaching through an equity literacy lens is Eric Gutstein and Bob Peterson’s *Rethinking Mathematics* (Rethinking Schools, 2013). In it, these educators provide multiple examples of teaching math in a way that develops students’ mathematical abilities while also helping them see math as a powerful analytical tool for addressing social problems.

For instance, students can develop formulas for how best to calculate a living wage, examine historical trends in wealth and poverty, or map income data in their own communities. Their...
findings can become fertile ground for rich discussions, deliberations, and debates about the nature of economic inequality.

**Principle 2. The most effective equity literacy approach is integrative and interdisciplinary.**

It’s easy to see how equity literacy naturally favors interdisciplinary inquiry. As we see in the math example above, students would also engage with reading, writing, speaking, history, and civics.

Science, technology, engineering, and the arts similarly could be tapped as students grapple with real-world equity issues in their communities. Sánchez (2014) describes an interdisciplinary project in which teams of students at a high-poverty school examined challenges in their racially segregated and economically strained community. One group, the Park Fixers, was frustrated “with having insufficient and unsafe equipment for students to play on during recess” (p. 185). Group members were also concerned that the children who lived in an adjacent low-income housing project had no place to play.

With guidance from teachers, the Park Fixers applied a wide variety of skills and an impressive depth of knowledge to address this community challenge they had identified. The students used video and still photography to document the conditions of the park. They used language arts and math skills to craft community surveys, distribute them, and analyze the results. They practiced communication skills by composing and sending letters to several key community members. They even worked with an urban design specialist who helped them capture their vision for a new park in blueprints. Finally, they delivered both oral and written reports to their teachers that incorporated all the material they had gathered.

Teachers considering similar approaches shouldn’t feel discouraged if students don’t see the fruits of their efforts within the school year. As Schultz (2008) notes, “spectacular things happen along the way” when students are engaged in this kind of work; the process is just as important—if not more important—than the actual outcome of their efforts.

By engaging students in this way, the teachers modeled equity literacy. They acknowledged what the students knew all along—that they were targets of bias and inequity. What was happening to their park wasn’t happening to the parks in wealthier neighborhoods. The teachers also helped strengthen students’ equity literacy by integrating lessons about math, writing, and other subjects with an opportunity to apply academic skills to redress this inequity. Cultivating equity literacy is most effective when it’s integrated into the broader curriculum rather than segregated into disconnected activities and when it’s a schoolwide commitment rather than isolated in one or two teachers’ classrooms.

**Principle 3. Students of all ages are primed for equity literacy.**

Did we mention that the Park Fixers were 3rd graders? The most common rebuke we hear when we talk about equity literacy goes something like this: My students are too young to talk about that stuff. If you’re thinking the same thing, consider this: Even preschool-age children have been exposed to socializing messages about themselves and one another—often even at school. Many students already knowingly experience bias and discrimination, and those who don’t often learn that it’s impolite to mention any distinctions. For example, researchers have found that children as young as three or four already differentiate racial categories—they’re not, as we may want to believe, “color-blind” (Olson, 2013; Winkler, 2009).

So when we say or think that students are “too young” to talk about issues like racism, it’s important that we stop and reflect on whom, exactly, we’re trying to protect. Are we protecting the students who are experiencing racial bias by sidestepping conversations about race, even as we ask them to celebrate diversity?

In our experience, the younger we start, the better. By integrating issues of equity into the content at young ages, we help all students develop the skills and language they need to explore complex and controversial issues in a community of people who may disagree about what’s going on or what should be done about it. Equally important, we demonstrate to students who are the targets of bias and inequity that their experiences matter, and we offer them an opportunity to challenge their peers’ misperceptions. As a result, they may experience the more celebratory, surface-level multicultural initiatives as safer and more legitimate. Meanwhile, students who enjoy more privileged identities become better able to interpret the
stereotypes and biases that feed any misperceptions they might have about the more marginalized people in their communities.

Principle 4. Students from all backgrounds need equity literacy. Many of the common examples of equity literacy in action come from high-poverty schools serving large percentages of students of color and nonnative speakers of English. Unfortunately, this can lead some people to believe that white and wealthy students wouldn’t benefit from a curriculum informed by equity literacy. In fact, these students may have the steepest learning curves when it comes to learning about bias, discrimination, and inequity. Traditional forms of multicultural education that focus on celebrating diversity rather than equity can reinforce their misunderstandings by feeding the assumption that celebrating diversity is enough—that everybody is starting on a level playing field.

A growing body of research provides helpful examples of how to engage more privileged students in an equity literacy curriculum (Swalwell, 2013). In one elite K–8 private school, teachers meet regularly in professional development study groups focused on race, gender, and social class to design curriculum and share their work. While the 8th grade teachers have asked their students to examine real-world historical and contemporary wealth gap data, the 4th grade teachers are inviting their students to share, in journal entries, what they know about being rich and poor, and the kindergarten teacher is designing a simple simulation of unequal distribution of resources.

The teachers are also compiling a list of formal and informal ways that class advantage goes unchecked at their school—for example, how morning meeting questions can sometimes invite students to brag about their material possessions. The teachers’ ultimate goal is to help students do more than simply “be nice” to people with less privilege; they want their students to understand the issues involved and commit to working toward a society with less economic inequality.

Principle 5. Teaching for equity literacy is a political act—but not more so than not teaching for equity literacy. Another common rebuke we hear is that teaching for equity literacy introduces views about social justice into the curriculum that don’t belong in school. But is teaching about poverty or sexism more political than pretending that poverty and sexism don’t exist by omitting them from the curriculum? How might we explain the politics of not teaching about these issues when many of our students are experiencing them, even within school? How can we prepare youth to be active participants in a democracy without teaching them about the most formidable barriers to an authentic democracy?

According to Hess and McAvoy (2014), there’s no silver bullet for engaging students in discussions about important and often controversial issues, but rather a series of factors that teachers must weigh to introduce these issues ethically and responsibly. It’s important for teachers to consider when to withhold or disclose their personal views and how to frame issues in relation to their students, the subject matter they’re teaching, and the community.

Ultimately, Hess and McAvoy conclude, classrooms should directly engage students in answering the question, How should we live together? It’s a nonpartisan question like its empirical cousin, How do we live together? but a deeply political one that’s essential in a diverse society based on democratic principles and committed to equity.

A More Meaningful Investment
As Cynthia taught us (“There’s racism at this school, and no one’s doing anything about it!”), students who feel marginalized in our schools may experience what we thought to be meaningful multicultural curriculums

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**Great Equity Literacy Resources**

Here are some of our favorite—and free—resources for an equity literacy curriculum:

- EdChange (www.edchange.org/multicultural/teachers.html)
- Education for Liberation Lab (www.edliberation.org/resources/lab)
- GLSEN (http://glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum)
- New York Collective of Radical Educators (www.nycore.org/curricula)
- SoJust (www.sojust.net)
- Teachers for Social Justice (www.teachersforjustice.org/search/label/all%20curriculum)
- Teaching Economics As If People Mattered (www.teachingeconomics.org)
- Teaching for Change (www.teachingforchange.org)
- Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources)
- Zinn Education Project (http://zinnedproject.org)
as a purposeful avoidance of a more serious reality. When we invest our multicultural energies in surface-level cultural exchanges, fantasies of colorblindness, or celebrations of whitewashed heroes while ignoring the actual inequities many of our students face, we demonstrate an implicit complicity with those inequities. We can avoid these pitfalls by building our multicultural curriculum efforts, not around cultural awareness or cultural diversity, but around the cultivation of equity literacy in both ourselves and our students.

References

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Water Wise

*All About Water Conservation*
A Super Science Script
Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - resource...

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...
All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - can do it!

We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.
Grade 2: Informational/Explanatory: Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1 (Copy for each student. Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher)

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informational piece to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

**Day 1  Get ready to write.**
- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: Why is it important to save water?
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.
- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Draw a picture of each to show what you chose.

**Day 2  Write!**
Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along if you can.
- What can you do to save water? Use the pictures you drew yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a picture. Tell what you might do and **why** that would be a good choice.

When you have finished, write a piece explaining what you can do to save water.
- What can you do to save water?
- Be sure to give lots of examples and explain how each would save water. Look back at *Water Wise* for ideas. Write as much as you can.

A good informational piece will:
1. Introduce the topic you are writing about
2. Clearly answer the question
3. Give lots of examples
4. "Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence
5. Use capitals, periods, and question marks
6. Spell words correctly

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes. If you like, you may add pictures to show what you wrote. Have fun!
Grade 2: Informational/Explanatory Writing Prompt: Teacher Directions

- Please be sure each response is labeled with: the student’s name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and the name of the person we should contact if we need permission to include the piece.
- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment - The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 -EcoWater Canada http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKfw64 (The video is recommended, but is optional.)
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the Reader’s Theatre. The Reader’s Theatre can be read aloud by the teacher or "performed" by older students or very competent readers. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed.
- The Reader’s Theatre provides information that may be used to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing, the teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases as needed.
- The prompt should be given two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Thank you for helping us to gather these writing samples, we’re sure they will be extremely helpful to both students and teachers!
How Does Your Garden Grow: Protocol

Overview: In this exercise, you will compare student pieces within a grade cluster and note the similarities and differences. The pieces in your packet have been written to a set of uniform prompts purposefully designed to produce student pieces in the same writing type, on the same topic, across a range of grade levels. Analyzing these pieces can help you distill the core elements of each writing type and gain a better understanding of expectations at each grade level.

Purpose:
- To identify the core elements of CCSS aligned writing in a particular writing type.
- To refine and deepen understanding of grade level expectations in the CCSS.
- To trace a developmental progression in CCSS aligned writing in a specific writing type.

Protocol:
*Note: This activity centers on observation, please do not use your copy of the Common Core Standards until the final step in the protocol. When analyzing pieces, focus on the information expressed and how it was expressed, not on mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.).*

1. Read the first piece in the packet. What elements of effective writing are evident in this sample? Discuss your observations with a partner.
2. Read the next piece. How is this piece similar to the previous piece? How is it different? Record your observations on the How Does Your Garden Grow? Record Sheet.
3. Continue reading, analyzing and discussing each piece. Be sure to capture your thinking on the record sheet as you work.
4. When you have finished, synthesize your observations by responding to the questions at the bottom of the recording sheet.
5. Now look at any one of the Common Core Writing Standards in the grade span and writing type you have just studied. Reflect: How might this exercise help educators to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of a particular writing standard?
How Does Your Garden Grow: Record Sheet

<table>
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<th>Key Differences</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Similarities in All/Most Pieces</th>
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Based on your observations, what are some core descriptors that define this writing type?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What patterns do you notice in the way expectations change over time?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
K-5 Developmental Progression

Common Core State Standard W.2 Informative/Explanatory Writing

File Name: IK Water
Kindergarten, Fall
On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Water

I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR

File Name: IK Saving Water
Informative/Explanatory
Kindergarten, Spring
On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Saving Water

What can you do to save water?

I am taking a bath. Not all fall.

I am turning off the water.

I am filling the bucket up. Not too high.

File Name: I1P Saving Water
Informational/Explanatory
Grade 1
On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Saving Water

What can you do to save water?

We need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. If your faucet is leaking turn it off. If we didn’t save water, we wouldn’t have any.
**File Name: I2P Water is Important**  
Informational/Explanatory  
Grade 2  
On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

**Water is Important**

Water is important. You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is turn off the sink after you brush your teeth! Another way is only fill your bathtub up half way! Also water is important so you should take a short shower. Also when you wash your hands don’t leave the water running! These are the ways why you should help save water.

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**File Name: I3P Water Use**  
Informational/Explanatory  
Grade 3  
On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

**Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don’t even have 5-2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bath, and much more so we need to save water. One good way to save water is leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. baths take at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from the sink to get hot and cold. If you put a bucket in your sink when the bucket is full you can use that water for lots of things. When its winter take buckets of snow and melt it then you have buckets of water to use. When its summer if you have a squirt gun use water from a toy that has water in it. If there’s anything leaking water make sure to get it fixed right away. Don’t buy water in a plastic container because plastic palute the eath. Please save water.
Conserving Water

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This is why we need to save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinklers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resource of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.
Saving Water

Did you know that you can save your homes water by just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water, you can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, facet, and shower head to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. you can turn off the facet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up save the water and reuse. over all there are alot of things you can do inside to save your homes water.

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass insted of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Over all there are alot of ways to save water outside of your house.

There are many ways to save your homes water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference to save water. Imagine if everyone in the cantry turned of the facet when brushing thier teeth, we could save enogh water to refill a lake! Over all it is important to save water inside and outside your house.
Water is important.
You should help save water.
And I am going to tell you how.
One way is Turn it Off the SINK.
After you brush your teeth.
Another way is only fill your bathtub up halfway.
Also, water is important so you should take a short shower.
So when you wash your hands don't leave the water running.
These are the ways why you should help save water.
(12) Water Use (Annotated)

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 2

On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Water is Important

Water is important. You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is Turn OFF The SINK AFTER YOU BRuSH Your TEETH!

Another way is ONLY FILL YOUR BATHTuB UP HALF WAY! Also water is important so you should TAKE A SHORT SHOWer. Also WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS DON’T LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING! These are the ways why you should help save water.

This second-grade informative/explanatory paragraph begins with an introductory sentence and then states the focus of the piece (You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how.). Four facts, from provided sources, develop the piece and are linked to each other and to the main idea by transitional words and phrases (1 way, another way, also). The piece concludes by restating the focus: These are the ways why you should help save water. At this grade level, sentences may be a bit clunky, particularly as students experiment with unfamiliar academic constructions. If this were an instructional piece, “These are the ways why” could be revised during the writing process.
Reflect and Write
Overview: Colorful Language

In this exercise, you will gain a better understanding of particular aspects of the standards by color coding student samples that provide concrete examples of a descriptor or set of descriptors used in the CCSS. Many descriptors are used repeatedly in the writing standards. Attaching descriptors to actual student writing will help clarify what each means at a particular grade level.

Purpose:

• To refine and deepen understanding of a particular aspect of effective writing.

• To become familiar with, and clarify, terminology used in the Common Core State Standards.

Protocol:

1. Choose a piece in the packet and locate the grade appropriate Common Core Writing Standard for Opinion/Argument, Informative/Explanatory or Narrative writing (W.1, W.2, W.3).

2. Read the directions on the Colorful Learning sheet to find out which parts of the standard you are to focus on and what colors you will need.

3. Annotate the student writing by finding and color coding examples of the descriptors you are focusing on.

4. When you have finished, check your observations against the annotated version of the same piece. Be sure to note any questions you have.

5. When you have finished color coding all of the pieces, discuss your observations with a colleague using the questions at the bottom of the Colorful Language sheet.

Common Ground Protocols: Using the In Common Collection to Better Understand the CCSS  http://www.achievethecore.org
www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org
**Colorful Language**

(Please adapt this sheet to reflect your professional development goals for this activity)

1. Locate, and read, the grade appropriate Common Core Writing Standard for the piece you are working with.

2. Look for examples of the following descriptors in the student writing. Color code them using the colors indicated.

3. When all pieces in your packet have been color coded, discuss the following questions with a colleague:

   - How did the writer use these techniques to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations?
   
   - How might you help students learn to effectively use these techniques in their writing?

---

**Opinion/Argument:** Find and color code examples to show how each of the following are used in the student sample: Introduction: red Opinion Statement: light green Reason #1 and supporting facts and details: yellow Reason #2 and supporting facts and details: blue Concluding Section: darker green *Note: Not all pieces will contain all of the above. How do expectations change from grade to grade?
Opinion Writing: K-5 Student Samples from the In Common Collection

Note: The following pieces were written after reading or listening to informational text about dogs and cats as pets. Students responded to the prompt: “Which is the best pet, a dog or a cat?” The stimulus text and full prompt for each grade level, as well as annotated versions of each of the pieces below are available at www.achievethecore.org.

File Name: OKP The Best Pet Opinion Kindergarten, Fall---On Demand Writing-Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

MKIECYKDBbD

*I like my cat because they are better than dogs.* *dictated response*

File Name: OKP Dog is the Best Kindergarten , Spring Opinion--On Demand Writing-Uniform Prompt

Dog is the Bst Becs thea BuRc.

Dog is the best because they bark.

File Name: O1P A Dog is Best Opinion Grade 1--On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt

The Best Pet

I used to have a dog and I thinck a dog is best. A dog becas its cute and it likes to Play and its snuggly and it likes to choo bones. A dog is best because of theese reasons.

File Name: O2P Dogs Rule Opinion Grade 2---On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Dogs rule

What pet is best for you cat or dog? I like dogs beacause they exercise a lot. Also they play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. Thats why I like dogs best.
The Best Pet

Are you looking for a now Pet? I'd rekomend a cat. For one thing they aren't that egspensev you could find one on your porch and aboped it. Cat's yushely baeth them self. Cat's will sleep with you and can help you cawlm down when you'r upset or mad. Cat's allso don't need training and you can’s leave cats home for the day. Cat’s don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet maebay see some cat's and you mite find your self a great pet!

Which is Better?

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Wich is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persaude you in the following.

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park, or a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could even be enjoyable too. Dogs don't just provide fun though. They can also provide protection.

Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you though? If you are, then great! If your not then thats okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

Dogs are Best

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

One reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because you can talk to them. And they listen to you. You can tell them secrets, and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what your saying.
Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because dogs can warn you of danger. And sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So with a dog its like you have your own danger alarm.

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with a dog, its almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, its like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get excersise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So even if you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic excersise. Which will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fastenating way. But to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibilities, and need maintenence and training, they are still worth the effort. But most importantly, they are like a best friend.
Reflect and Write
What Makes Text Complex?

- **Meaning**
  - Layers of meaning
  - Purpose
  - Concept complexity

- **Structure**
  - Text features
  - Genre
  - Organization

- **Language**
  - Vocabulary
  - Sentence length and structure
  - Figurative language
  - Regional/historical usage (dialects)

- **Knowledge**
  - Background
  - Experiences
What Makes this Text Complex?

Meaning  Structure
Language  Knowledge
Writing for Understanding: Conceptual Planner

Grade: K-2
School: Blue School

Topic/Subject
Seasonal Changes/Science

Text
It’s Spring by Linda Glaser

Central Ideas
(Choose only one in each category. Write out the whole standard.)

Content Standard:
K-ESS2-1 Patterns in the natural world can be observed, used to describe phenomena, and used as evidence.

CC Reading Standard:
RI 1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

CC Writing Standard:
W 1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
Title of Text(s): Observations on Text Complexity: *Where will students need support?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day length:</th>
<th>Exclamation points:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The days are getting longer. Now the sun sets <em>after</em> dinner.”</td>
<td>“Come out! Smell the flowers! Hear the birds sing! It’s spring!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poetic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…so sunny and cheerful they make my heart sing.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animals/Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Then all the spring peepers and bullfrogs sing.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title of Text: It’s Spring!  

Writing Type: Informative/Explanatory

FOCUSING QUESTION: (What is happening in the spring?)

FOCUSING STATEMENT: (Many changes happening in spring.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Changes</td>
<td>Plant Changes</td>
<td>Weather Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animals wake up</td>
<td>buds</td>
<td>rain-creeks/streams flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birds build nests</td>
<td>new leaves</td>
<td>days get longer, more light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birds return</td>
<td></td>
<td>warm weather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plans to Gather and Record Evidence

1. Evidence will be recorded by
   - full group
   - small group
   - individual student

2. Evidence will be recorded on
   - chart
   - graphic organizer
   - whiteboard
   - sorting mats
   - other:

3. Evidence will be recorded in
   - words/phrases
   - pictures
   - drawings
   - objects
   - photos
   - other:
Oral Processing

Understanding of evidence will be built through:

- Discussion: find and discuss evidence full group
- Drawing: choose 3 pieces of evidence- sketch and label
- Sorting/Sequencing: small groups sort pictures to determine types of change: plant, animal, weather

Writing

Understanding of writing craft will be built through:

- Structures: hand paragraph
- Models: Analyze teacher written model: It’s Winter!
The Painted Essay: A Tool for Teaching Basic Essay Form

**Introduction:**
Catches the Reader’s Attention
Gives background information

**FOCUS STATEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point 1</th>
<th>Point 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Proof Paragraph 1:**
Gives evidence and reasons to support Point 1

**Transition**

**Proof Paragraph 2:**
Gives evidence and reasons to support Point 2

**Conclusion**
What?
So what?
Test Drive

FOCUSING QUESTION: (What is happening in the spring?)

FOCUSING STATEMENT: (Many changes happening in spring.)

Many changes happen in spring. Plants get buds and leaves. Birds build nests. Animals wake up from hibernating. Spring brings lots of changes.

### Notes and Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Student Need</th>
<th>Instructional Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lots of information to make sense of</td>
<td>Record in pictures Sort into broad categories Choose 3 pieces before writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating focus/conclusion</td>
<td>Develop together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamina</td>
<td>Write in chunks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lesson Sequence

Outline your lesson **briefly** below.

(*Describe sessions 3-8 in one to three sentences or phrases. Adjust number of sessions or sequence as needed.*)

**Session One**
First Read for enjoyment

**Session Two**
Close Read using Close Reading Questions

**Session Three**
Gathering Evidence
Reread aloud, stopping page by page to record evidence (use illustrations from book)

**Session Four**
Working with Evidence
Work in small groups to sort picture evidence into broad categories (eg. plants, animals, weather)
Session Five
Working with Evidence
Students choose three pieces of evidence and create individual graphic organizer using drawings and words.

Session Six
Oral Processing
Turn and talk to a partner: point to evidence chosen; practice expressing it in a sentence.

Session Seven
Write
Review color-coded paragraph. Develop choices for focus sentence. Students write/illustrate topic sentence.

Session Eight
Write
Review hand paragraph. Students write/illustrate evidence sentences.

Session Nine
Write
Review color-coded paragraph. Develop choices for last sentence (conclusion). Students write/illustrate concluding sentence.

Session Ten
Edit and Share
Review capitals, end punctuation. Students proofread, edit. Share with a partner.
Reflect and Write