



**Advancing Common Core Standards for Literacy:
Observations, Strategies and Resources**

New Mexico State University Golden Apple Scholars

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Literacy Toolkit: Engaging, Creative and Organized Learning Strategies

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Literacy Observation Findings

My Golden Apple observation journey began in a classroom filled with cartoons. A giant Homer Simpson greeted me at the door, and the white board was filled with sketches of feet and roller coasters surrounded by formulas and numbers. This was Del Hanson's high school physics classroom. Del Hanson strives to keep his students engaged the entire class period. When I first met Mr. Hanson he told me his goal was for students to exclaim "Wow! That went by so fast!" when they heard the school bell.

In Physics more emphasis is placed on numbers and formulas than reading and writing, yet students in Del Hanson's classroom still build literacy skills. Instead of using a heavy textbook each student creates their own "physics textbook" during the course of the year. Students develop writing skills by creating carefully written notes that are placed in a binder with Yoda's face on the cover. Students must find a way to describe the physics concepts in a way that makes sense to them. This strategy results in students writing clearer and more detailed notes, focusing on class instruction and it is easy for the instructor to grade.

The next teacher I observed was Kerry Sandoval in her second grade classroom. Kerry Sandoval teaches literacy by using stations. The stations in this classroom incorporated all of the common core literacy elements, which include reading information texts and literature, writing, speaking, listening and language development. These stations are rich with instructional strategies like listening to audio books, writing summaries in colorful journals, small group one-on-one teacher read-aloud sessions, and use of a computer reading program. Groups moved effortlessly from station to station when Ms. Sandoval rang a bell. Students seemed to enjoy switching activities and the room felt focused and enthusiastic. The stations were engaging

because they incorporated several different learning designs. An example of this is some books were available on tape so auditory learners could listen to the story, while other stations let students read individually. Students also received small group instruction with the teacher, with a book that was tailored to their reading level. Kerry Sandoval's classroom provided students with a plethora of literacy skills using different universal designs for learning, tailored instruction and engaging stations. As a result students worked together to complete stations and each student received targeted instruction for their reading level.

Jeanette Cordova, a kindergarten teacher, promoted literacy by reading stories aloud to engage her students. Students sat close to her chair as she showed pictures and read aloud in an enthusiastic tone. Mrs. Cordova measured listening comprehension by asking questions throughout her text. Students responded by shouting out the answers together.

My next sets of observations were Amy Simpson's 10th grade honors English classroom, and Kathleen Gardner's mock trial, and 9th grade English classes. These English teachers used engaging, organized and creative teaching strategies in the classrooms. Amy Simpson treated her students with respect and challenged them to think about complex ideas in literature. An example of this is her "opening exercise" where students receive a small sheet of paper with a complex quote. Students must find a way to analyze this quote and relate it to the previous themes they have been studying. Mrs. Simpson also works to ensure that all of her students are effective writers. Each morning students complete a grammar punk. Grammar Punk is a game that is challenging, fun and teaches grammar rules. Kathleen Gardner uses similar teaching strategies. In Ms. Gardner's class, students use organized binders to keep track of important information. Students also use strategies like ABC worksheets to develop themes about the text that they are

reading. Both Amy Simpson and Kathleen Gardner engage students in interesting and high intensity conversation, while taking the time to work with students one-on-one. Students seem to enjoy the class, participated in classroom discussion, and gained knowledge from the instructional strategies.

Literacy Observation Conclusion

I observed that Golden Apple teachers commonly used an ABC claim sentence to strengthen students reading of informational texts and literature and writing skills. Kathleen Gardner taught the ABC strategy by writing a chart on the white board with A, B and C as the columns. Under “A” students listed the complete title of the work, the type of text and the author. Under “B” students listed a verb like: identifies, describes, explains or teaches. Under “C” students listed what they were claiming. An example sentence is: The play *Much to do About Nothing* by William Shakespeare describes the different character types through foils. This strategy can be expanded to CEE - Claim, Evidence, and Explain. Amy Simpson used a similar strategy by introducing a theme to the class, such as the tool of using laughter as a weapon, then asking students to find evidence to support this theme through their class readings. Students can do this assignment verbally in class, written in a notebook, or as homework.

An unexpected strategy I observed was Amy Simpson’s Grammar Punk game using three dice composed of vowel, consonants, and numbers. First, a grammar topic is picked such as commas, semicolons, periods, etc. Then the vowel and consonant dice are rolled. If a G and an O are rolled students must think of words that begin with a G and contain an O such as golf. The number die is then rolled, this number represents how many times the students must write a word with a G and an O in their sentence. The teacher reviews the grammar rules of the topic, such as

all the grammar rules of commas. Then the students must write a sentence using the grammar rule correctly and containing the correct number of words with the vowel and consonant rolled on the dice. This strategy improved students understanding of grammar in a creative and entertaining way.

Strategies that should be promoted are creative, organized and engaging. Strategies that seemed effective were organized and easy to follow. An example of this is Del Hanson's Physics Textbook and Kathleen Gardner's class notebook. Both teachers had students number every page in their notebook. This way students could go back and look at previous notes easily by page number. Kathleen Gardner also used a manila folder with library check out slips to help students organize important quotes from the text. Each library check out slip was labeled with a theme such as quotes about strong relationships. As students read, they would write quotes on a note card and file them in the appropriate slip. Effective strategies were also creative. For example Amy Simpson used the format of a satirical newspaper, The Onion. Students created their own satirical newspaper while relating to themes they were studying in class. Kathleen Gardener also inspired students to find district rules on issues that they would like to see changed at school, such as dress code policy. Finally I observed that the most effective strategies were engaging and required the students' full focus. Kerry Sandoval created this environment through literacy stations. Students focused on one common core element such as writing summaries in a journal for a short time then they quickly transitioned to a new activity that focused on a different common core element such as speaking and listening. Students were constantly engaged and stimulated, and as a result they worked hard and were interested in what they were learning.

New teachers should be aware of issues and challenges such as incorporating students with disabilities and English language learners as they advance literacy standards in their classrooms. Kathleen Gardner explained to me that an astounding number of freshman were failing English 9. To combat this problem she worked together with a special educator to give failing students extra attention and skills that they needed to succeed. She stated the special educator provided “tools and strategies that work for every student, not just students in Special Education.”

Literacy Resources for New Teacher

- 1) Videos, Common Core Resources and Lesson Plans for Teachers: Teaching Channel. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <https://www.teachingchannel.org/>

This website contains many videos of useful teaching strategies, and classroom management tips.

- 2) Super Duper Story Maker - Mobile App. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=mxasm22#.VTfdwfmnyp0>

This is an app which allows students to create their own stories digitally.

- 3) BrainPOP - Animated Educational Site for Kids - Science, Social Studies, English, Math, Arts. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <https://www.brainpop.com/>

This site provides movies, quizzes and activities for a variety of subjects.

- 4) Spolin, V. (1986). *Theater games for the classroom: A teacher's handbook*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.

This book contains theater games which foster teamwork, imagination and discovery.

- 5) Ready. Set. Grad. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <http://readyssetgrad.org/>

This website helps students plan for college, and create a plan to finish high school.

- 6) Weebly is the easiest way to create a website, store or blog. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <http://www.weebly.com/>

This website builds blogs and websites. In my Integrating Teaching with Technology class we used Weebly to create an interactive lesson. Students go to the website the teacher created and read texts, watch videos, take quizzes and complete assignments.

Literacy Observations and Toolkit

By Alexis Puente

Golden Apple Scholars Program 2015

For my observations I decided to observe high school grade levels because I am studying to be a high school math teacher. The classrooms I observed ranged mostly from 10th grade-12th grade. The subjects I observed were English, Wildlife science, and Physics. In these grade levels and subjects at the high schools, the Common Core elements of Literacy were well implemented by the teachers.

Reading Informational Texts and Literature

In one classroom, the students were reading a few different short articles. The teacher had them highlight any main ideas in the text on their own, then they paired up and discussed what main ideas they thought were important together, and to end the teacher discussed it with them as a class. One strategy the teacher gave the students to help them was to only highlight key points and evidence and to not forget to look at the pictures and its captions to help you understand the main ideas. Viewing the main ideas on your own and also viewing it with another student can help you understand the story more because you might've missed a main point that the other student did not.

Writing

Strategies a teacher used while her class was reading a novel were writing summaries on chapters they are currently on, and a table including the plot, technique devices, subject, and theme. The table was a great strategy for the students to really understand what the story or certain chapter was about. The table helped students break down the chapter and its main ideas, which also helped students view how the story was moving along. The teacher also used this table while reading a poem with breaking down each stanza. Another strategy I observed that I think is very appealing and engaging to students is that they had to compose a "tweet", like the

ones on the social media Twitter, on what they have learned. Being able to incorporate what most students use on a daily basis in their lives helps them get engaged into their writing and learning the subject.

Speaking and Listening

When the students worked in groups it showed different speaking and listening elements. Students had to be able to listen to each other's ideas or opinions and work together to put all those ideas together. For example one class was working on group satirical newspapers. In these newspapers each student had to create their own article and had to put them all together to form a newspaper. When I was observing one group, they had difficulty listening to one student's opinion. The strategy the teacher suggested that helped them was looking at two different outcomes based on that opinion and it did help them choose the right one. While going over summaries to stories, the class discussed it out loud. The strategy I liked that the teacher used was having different students continue to summarize the story after one another spoke. This helped not only the teacher view who actually understood the story but also helped the students understand the story better and even in different views. Discussing out loud as a class is a great speaking and listening strategy all classrooms should have so students can be able to share their views and opinions as well as listen to others and learn more.

Language

A strategy I saw one teacher use for students to help them in their readings was vocabulary cards. I have also done vocabulary cards in my high school years. Vocabulary cards have the word they need or will learn with the students predicted meaning, the actual definition, an example of the word, and a picture or symbol. I think these cards are very useful because they

make you learn more about the word and help you remember what it means without just learning the definition plain and simple.

The teachers have very good interactions with the students. I observed that all these teachers did not hesitate to walk around their classroom to make sure students understood what they were working on and see if anyone needed help. I have always learned that teachers need to have that time to walk around so students are able to ask questions and even to get students to focus on their work. I also observed that teachers didn't always shut down students comments that didn't go along with what they were working on. The teacher listened to the students and was interested in what they had to say. These conversations didn't last long because the teacher would know when the students were actually not working. Being able to build that teacher to student relationship shows students that they are safe in their classrooms and don't have to be afraid to talk to the teacher or ask them questions on their work. In one class, I observed the different learning styles being applied in the lessons each day. The teacher would have a hands-on activity or presentation, written down notes and problems on the board, and also explained out loud the information. These different activities helped different learners whether you were visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. The only challenge I observed is implementing reading and writing literacy elements into classes other than English. As I look into becoming a math teacher, implementing reading and writing into math lesson is somewhat difficult since literacy like writing material isn't in mathematics lesson plans usually, but as I learn more about literacy elements it will become easier to apply them.

I observed a positive outcome that reading and writing strategies go along with each other. In the classrooms I saw that you had to start off reading something whether it's articles, novels, poems, etc. to begin the common core elements of writing. The strategies used in reading

like focusing on main ideas are then used in writing strategies like summarizing the main idea or breaking it down like the plot table. I believe all these literacy strategies go hand in hand with each other and are used in the classroom every day together. I also noticed an unexpected outcome in students presenting. I only observed students presenting poems they wrote in one class, but from that observation it seemed like the presentation was informal and without structure. It made me realize though that presentations in high school are not commonly structured well or formally. It is usually just students going up to the front of the class and reading off a paper really quick. I think it is better to have at least one formal structured presentation so students are prepared for college and careers in the future.

The different styles of writings, and types of readings is what I noted common in these strategies in my observations. The classes shared common readings from poems, novels, and mostly articles. Teachers have to be able to incorporate different readings so students have a variety to learn from. In the English classes they also had common styles of writings from arguments, poems, rhetorical, and analysis. Teachers also had common speaking and listening elements. They all had discussions between their whole class on lessons and they were able to have great teacher to student interaction, even student to student interaction.

In my opinion the best literacy strategies that should be promoted are in speaking and listening. To have a well-controlled classroom, I believe there needs to be good communication and listening from the teachers as well from the students. Strategies best for implementing good speaking and listening can be the different types of discussions and communication from one-on-one to class discussions. It is a lot easier for the teacher and students to communicate and not feel afraid to state their opinions when you have more of these literacy elements in your classroom. One issue might be getting students to focus on these literacy elements and getting them to have

discussions to listen to others. It's like in any type of class with any other standards other than literacy; it is hard at first to receive student's full attention. I believe though just overall it will be a challenge to fully understand the different strategies new teachers can use when they apply literacy standards in their classroom.

Literacy Resources

Kenney, J. M., & Association for Supervision and Curriculum, D. (2005). *Literacy Strategies for Improving*

Mathematics Instruction. Retrieved from

[http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=60cc4305-e0fe-44a3-ba89-](http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=60cc4305-e0fe-44a3-ba89-0fc9c3983cf8%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=111&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSszY29wZT1zaXRI#db=nlebk&AN=141345)

[0fc9c3983cf8%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=111&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSszY29wZT](http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=60cc4305-e0fe-44a3-ba89-0fc9c3983cf8%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=111&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSszY29wZT1zaXRI#db=nlebk&AN=141345)

[1zaXRI#db=nlebk&AN=141345](http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=60cc4305-e0fe-44a3-ba89-0fc9c3983cf8%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=111&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSszY29wZT1zaXRI#db=nlebk&AN=141345) - This link leads to the EBook “Literacy Strategies for Improving

Mathematics Instruction”. The book talks about how language, writing, and reading can be

applied into mathematics, difficulties that may be encountered, compares literacy in language

arts classrooms to mathematics classrooms, and overall provides educators with literacy

strategies and tools.

Many Authors. (2014). *Share My Lesson: By teachers, for teachers*. Retrieved from

<http://www.sharemylesson.com/high-school-teaching-resources/> - This website has many

different lesson plans in different subjects. These lesson plans are shared by other teachers and

range from worksheets, games, posters, presentations and assessments. They have sections for

each common core standards.

Simons, B. (2014, July 28). *Mathwords: Terms and Formulas from Beginning Algebra to Calculus*.

Retrieved from www.mathwords.com – This is a dictionary website with all math terms

and formulas from beginning algebra to calculus. Teachers can show this to students to

help them study terms.

Southern Regional Education Board. (n.d.). *High Schools That Work: One Dozen Literacy Strategies*

EVERY Teacher Can and SHOULD Use. Retrieved from

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:B_SWI5XuhpgJ:www.clovis-

[schools.org/yms/teacher_tools/Dozen%20Instructional%20Strategies%20Every%20Teacher%20Can%20Use.doc+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](https://www.ck12.org/teacher_tools/Dozen%20Instructional%20Strategies%20Every%20Teacher%20Can%20Use.doc+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us) – This is a word document you can download with about 12 different literacy strategies teachers can use. It provides teachers with explanations of the strategies and example sheets of the activity.

Literacy Observations and Toolkit

By Maddison Warpula

Golden Apple Scholars Program 2015

When starting my observations the first classroom I observed was Amy Simpson's 10th grade English class at the Arrowhead Early College High School. The class played an interactive dice game called "Grammar Punk" that had the whole class involved and sharing their own work as well as writing down their thoughts and sentences that went along with the group activity. The time that I was there a lot of conversations with the whole class and Mrs. Simpson took place and there was a comfort with her and the students that made the setting more comfortable to be able to discuss their thoughts. The second time I went and observed Mrs. Simpson classroom they started off with AP prep questions on the iPads to prepare them for the actual exam they are going to take in a few weeks. Once the individual work was finished she did a quick homework check on the individual homework reading of Shakespeare. Then Mrs. Simpson read a letter from Samuel Johnson that the class had already read individually, then the work of some of the students was shown and read aloud to show the students what was well written and some things that could be improved for their AP exam. Then the papers were handed back so that students could see what needed to be improved. The circular open seating really helped to have students to see each other and Mrs. Simpson sat while talking to her students which helped to be more involved and interactive with the students. Overall there was a lot of student to student interactions as well as student to teacher interaction that really helped the classroom dynamics with growth and helping to gain strengths with literacy.

My next observation was a change of scenery when I observed Kerry Sandoval's 2nd grade class at Dona Ana Elementary School. While I was observing the students were in guided reading groups. There was students working individually on the computers, students were independently reading, working on a group reading assignment, as well as a group was working

with Mrs. Sandoval on reading books aloud and growing a vocabulary bank of words the students struggle with. The word bank is something that is super helpful to the students because they all wanted to answer Mrs. Sandoval's questions to tell her what the word was to show her that they understood. Also the classroom was super organized and labeled so that if a student needed something they could find it quickly and quietly. Also the word banks on the walls and helpful tools were clearly visible to help students think out of their own vocabulary to help build their own.

Another classroom that had lots of helpful tools was Jeanette Cardova's Kindergarten classroom that is also at Dona Ana Elementary School. Her classroom was very organized it had tables and chairs in sets of four for the students. Also at the back of the room there was personnel lockers for each student as well as hooks for the student's backpacks to help eliminate distractions. Also there were helpful visuals and word banks to help with spelling for the students. When observing the students were learning about elephants and the class was reading along in the power point with Mrs. Cardova. When the power point was over there was a worksheet that the class went over together and they had a large paper that they filled in the blanks on it then on their own papers. Once they finished filling in the blanks they worked on their own individual sentences that they worked on the rest of the class. Mrs. Cardova helped to spell sentences and to help them expand on those sentences so they weren't just a few words but they actually formed a descriptive sentence.

My last observation was in Truth or Consequences with Barbra Pearlman who is a key member of the G.R.I.T. program. This was so interesting to learn about the students and the online class they are a part of. This new program really hones in on helping students get a diploma. Students have lessons on the computer that they do individually and they go at their

own pace. They also are told frequently where they are on their work and how they need to stay on track. Students are rewarded for moving forward and they have very little distractions because they have to turn in their phone at the beginning of class and don't get it until school is over. I think these tools are essential to helping the students to succeed.

The similarities of the teachers was that they had control of their classes. The students knew when to be serious and when they can talk amongst themselves without causing conflict. The teachers also did a lot of work with the students so that they made sure they fully understood what was expected of them and to make sure they really did understand everything fully. Every question that the students asked was answered to the best of the teacher's abilities and the students really seemed to enjoy the class work. I think only group work is a strategy that should be avoided. Students when they participate in group work not everyone participates and it's hard to tell who actually understands the lesson and who is struggling. The even balance of group and individual work is something that I think works well in the classroom. I think that working on reading with the class and helping them know background information to understand the writing fully is essential to help with literacy comprehension.

Something that was surprising to me was the G.R.I.T. program and that essentially the students are doing everything right there. They don't leave the computer all day and they don't have homework because everything that they do is in that classroom. It was very impressive to hear that they have already had four graduates that wouldn't have graduated if it wasn't for this program. Something else that was unexpected to me was the size of the high school to the ratio of students. The classes had a handful of students some may have had twenty six but for the most part there was about fifteen students. The strategy of having small classes I think is wise because

with smaller classes there is more one on one time with students so that they are able to understand and to move forward with knowledge is everything including literacy.

Lesson plans that could be useful in the classroom

Lesson plan for 1-2 to teach on diversity for literacy

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/okay-different-teaching-diversity-890.html>

Tool to help with understanding literacy for prek-8

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/visual-tools-differentiating-reading-and-writing-instruction>

Computer lesson plans for literacy

<http://www.digitalliteracy.gov/resources-by-term/81>

Spring 2015 Literacy Toolkit

By Kayli Laney

Golden Apple Scholars Program 2015

Spring 2015 Literacy Toolkit

For the Golden Apple Scholar Program, I participated in six observations this semester. I observed Kerry Sandoval at Doña Ana she taught reading to a classroom full of second graders. I also observed Amy Simpson's advanced tenth grade English course over two different days. Additionally, I observed Kathleen Gardner for three periods. The first was mock trial, the second was tenth grade honors English, and the final was ninth and tenth grade English intervention. By the end of the observation period, I was able to do six observations. Each of these classrooms provided me with new ideas, but more than anything they each instilled in me a greater excitement about my future as an educator as I watched teachers who love their jobs, execute lessons that help students love learning. Especially in terms of literacy, it is paramount that each teacher, regardless of content area, makes reading, writing, speaking and listening, part of their lessons.

In Mrs. Sandoval's classroom, I observed her implementing station teaching. She began the day with journal writing, and then moved into reading. In order to cover all of the material, Mrs. Sandoval breaks the class into four stations, and with the help of an assistant, five. One group works on the computer working through interactive reading and writing modules. Another group continues to write in their journals. Another group does silent reading. When the assistant is available, a group of students works to read with his help. The final group works directly with Mrs. Sandoval to read, summarize, and work on vocabulary. Sandoval has clearly done a great deal of frontloading. The students knew where they were supposed to be based on certain cues.

Sandoval was able to have the groups break, then, after the time at each station was up, 10-15 minutes depending on interruptions, Mrs. Sandoval would ring a wire wand against the table, and without any further explanation or direction, the students would get up and move to their next station. These activities allowed students to both read and write, participate in differentiated activities, and spend some concentrated time working directly with Mrs. Sandoval. As Daniels and Zemelman, authors of *Subjects Matter*, suggest is so important, Sandoval does not just assign reading, she teaches reading, by giving students the skill sets they need (41). Beyond just providing a variety of stations, Mrs. Sandoval differentiates within each station. For example, when writing, students were asked to both write about what they read, as well as draw something that illustrates what they gathered from what they read. Students were observed reading while also listening to the book. Not all of the groups were the same size, and each group was working on a different text with Mrs. Sandoval at the teacher station.

Though this was an elementary setting, I think station teaching is applicable to all grade levels and across content area. Educators can make the daunting task of making sure each student is seen much more manageable by reducing group size. In the meantime, the students who are not working directly with Mrs. Sandoval are reading and writing, which, for the most part, keeps the other students engaged in productive activities. While station teaching is clearly a great tool, one of the challenges is monitoring the students that are not at the teacher station. Because the instructor is focusing on only a few students at a time, children at student-lead stations can be easily distracted. This is part of why frontloading and the use of cues is so important.

In my observations of Amy Simpson, I was able to see how to effectively incorporate texts of varying types to contribute to a larger idea and unit. Simpson uses literature circles to cover several books at a time while also supporting student-choice. Simpson allows the students

to choose books from a collection, and everyone who chooses the same text, becomes part of a literature circle for that book. This is similar to Sandoval's station teaching strategy in that instead of teaching one thing to the entire group, students are broken down into more manageable numbers. The texts she chooses are also really diverse. For example, as part of a warm-up, Simpson asks her students to consider a Mark Twain quote on laughter as part of responding to "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift. In this way, instruction is purposeful, and students are really interacting with text instead of passively taking it in. Simpson also frequently uses TED talks, recorded presentations on topics of all kinds, to both clarify and add to the curriculum. These talks are consistently engaging, and bring new ideas to the table, so this is also a great way to incorporate listening. In their book Daniels and Zemelman share, "... the standards call for students to read widely, and to compare texts" (35). Simpson honors this by having students work with modern non-fiction texts that speak to the fictional literature they are reading. Making content relevant while still covering the standards can seem difficult, but Simpson's use of not only different genres, but pulling those texts from different time periods, is really effective.

Kathleen Gardner also prioritizes relevance. In her Mock Trial class, Gardner addresses important social issues both in terms of how they are situated in history, and what they look like right here, right now, for her students. She uses whole group discussions to drive the class and as they share their thoughts, and respond to the thoughts of their classmates, they find themselves not just speaking and listening, but developing arguments. Unsurprisingly, this can escalate without mediation, but the intensity can pay off when monitored. Students learn to respectfully present their points of view and respond to their classmates. Gardner presents hot-button issues, and after the class does some unpacking in discussion, she asks them to choose a social issue

they are passionate about, write about it, and propose potential solutions. This assignment is not a typical argumentative essay, but something that could ultimately be submitted to a higher authority and make a very real impact. When it is relevant, when it is purposeful, students are more likely to be engaged. For this reason, it is worth looking at genres of writing that address the standards, but could also maybe be published, or used another way.

Relevance makes curriculum accessible, so does differentiation. In my observation experiences I encountered dice games, and even witnessed a teacher galloping for the sake of instruction. In Gardner's intervention class, with several English Language Learners, she and her co-teacher were able to take what could have been a standard close-reading, and turn it into an interactive experience. Students annotated, they read out loud, they listened, they presented their findings on alliteration to the rest of the class, and they participated in kinesthetic activities. When learning about iambic pentameter, students were encouraged to clap for every syllable as they mapped the poem's meter. Gardner also showed the students how they could gallop to count syllables, and demonstrated. For the rest of the period, students clapped, tapped toes, and talked their way through all fourteen lines. Suddenly, hard to understand sonnets were within a more manageable reach.

Simpson also practices kinesthetic differentiation. In her advanced placement course, students are reading and working with "Twelfth Night" by William Shakespeare. Students do most of their reading at home, but Simpson wants to be sure that students are understanding the text, and that they are reading it completely. She provides them with response prompts to log their reading, but she also has them participate in tableaux, frozen "pictures" of scenes from the text. She broke the students into groups of four. The students then receive a sheet with five scenes to choose from. They must pick two of the scenes, decide which students will act as

which characters from the scene, and then they perform their tableaux for the class. They then explain why they made the choices they did to form their tableaux. This allows students to pinpoint the most important and most telling moments in the scene, step into character, use physical activity and the space to demonstrate understanding, and explain their “pictures” through speaking. It also provides students with a small group experience and to work with their peers.

One of the strategies I was most impressed by was the use of “Grammar Punk” in Amy Simpson’s advanced placement class. Often, teachers struggle with making the technical things feel interesting to students. With relevance and differentiation in mind, I was surprised to see Simpson passing around dice in order to teach students the proper way to use a colon. After reviewing the rules for colons, Simpson gave four different students four different dice: consonant, topic, vowel, and number. The students rolled, the results were posted on the board, and the students began to write sentences that demonstrated their command of colon rules while also following the guidelines set by the dice. Rolling the dice created interest, and the creativity that was sparked by the guidelines made the lesson fun.

Ultimately, relevance and differentiation are key. The teachers I observed were not content to lecture to the class the entire hour to hour and a half. The students were not just on the receiving end of instruction, but helped shape the learning environment with their ideas and their participation. On the other end of this, the teachers worked to ensure that every student had an avenue that gave him/her access to what was being taught, which made that participation easier.

Anytime we can differentiate, and make sure that what we are discussing has some sort of weight or relatability to the lives of the students we teach, we increase our odds of executing an

effective lesson. There is no “one right way” to satisfy the common core standards, especially in English Language Arts where the possibilities are as limitless as the texts we could read. Mixing it up in terms of what is read, what is assigned, and what intelligence is being tapped into keeps teachers and students alike on their toes. Using sources like Grammar Punk, and the Learning Design Collaborative is a great way to take the passive approach up a notch or two. We are in a world where distractions abound. Students find their time in high demand, and are frequently bombarded by social media and text messages. It can be difficult to teach when students are so often checked out, but when they are interacting, when they have no choice but to be present, they benefit, and so do we as educators.

References and Resources

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Varied Learning Abilities of Students Require Varied Teaching Techniques

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Abstract

This paper examines different teaching styles of teachers that were observed. Each teacher taught different subjects as well as grades. The teaching styles that were observed were examined for the possibility of successfully using them with all students. This paper also examines how each student in the same classroom environment may require different learning styles. Not all students learn the same, so teachers should focus not only on teaching the subject but also reaching out to all students of varying learning abilities. Some students do well reading straight from a book, while other students get bored or lose focus because they require an involved, visual, or hands-on approach to learning. If a teacher is able to involve multiple teaching styles into a single lesson it would be more successful for all students involved.

Varied Learning Abilities of Students Require Varied Teaching Techniques

The acquisition of knowledge from a caring, passionate being is one of the most important things a student will remember throughout their life. Being aware of a student's ability to retain knowledge and the specific way that a student learns is a key factor in the success of teaching.

I was given the ability to observe the teaching style of educators in subjects varying from Physics and Science to English and Literature. Although these subjects are different, being able to comprehend the literary portion of each is very important. I observed students in different learning environments and grades, which ranged from 2nd grade to students in 9th thru 12th grade. I took note and compared the teaching style used for each grade. I based most my observations off of my own ability to learn and comprehend what is being taught.

Plato stated, "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each" (as cited in Cleveland, 2004, p. 91). I agree with this statement. Each student learns differently and if they are being taught the same as the next student, they may not understand the subject at hand. One student may be able to learn just by reading straight from a book or by being told what to do and they will do great, while another student has to have a hands-on approach, have visuals, or be involved in a related project to learn the same subject. Personally, I am a hands-on person, visual learner. I have always learned best when I am involved with the subject. I have had educators who will only teach one way for every student which works well for some students while it leaves others struggling. The educators that I remember best are those that involved a variety of teaching styles for the one subject or that knew how to integrate each subject with the next in a way that every student could learn.

The educators that were observed all had one thing in common; they did not teach their entire class in one specific way. Whether it was a science based class or an English class, more than one style of teaching was involved in the literature portion that was being taught in that moment. The varied teaching styles got students of every learning type and personality involved.

One technique that was observed was assembling the class in a large circle and having each student take note of anything that is talked about. This technique seemed to work really well with reading literature, it got every student involved. The technique not only got the students involved in the book by reading it, but it also got them involved by having a face to face peer discussion about what they read and learned. This face to face technique got the students to see multiple sides to the story or was given insight from others about what they got out of the literature. Students were subtly involved in the discussion about the book with one another rather than everyone facing one way and only answering questions asked by their teacher.

A similar technique that was observed was having the class break up into small groups and work on different projects related to the book being read. This gave the students the ability to discuss what they learned and how they interpreted the literature with other students in a more one-on-one situation. Having that peer to peer discussion created an environment that is not intimidating for the student. Also by having different projects related to the same literature piece, different learning techniques are involved. Students of varied comprehensive levels will be able to pick up the information at the same pace and understand it.

Other techniques I saw that worked really well with keeping the attention of the students when teaching literature, which in turn also gives the students the ability to retain information is to keep the subject interesting. By relating it back to subjects that the students have interest in you can stay at their level while instilling the tools needed for the students to understand and learn. I observed that the

use of appropriate movie or video clips related to the material as well as putting a not so serious twist on the information got the students interested and talking about the subject. Involving the development of a hands-on project related to the literature proved to keep the students interested and gave them the ability to understand fully what they are being taught. The students even seemed excited about what they learned. The learning environment of each of these techniques is an approachable environment for all students. If a student is intimidated, does not understand, or is bored, they will have a hard time learning and may give up altogether, which is not the goal of an educator.

Conclusions

My own experiences of as student played into my approach of what I observed. The most influential teacher in my life knew exactly how to reach out to every student that she taught. Her techniques were similar to the teachers that I observed. Her techniques got every student involved and there was never a dull moment.

I have found that in order for different students to enjoy what they are learning they each require different learning needs. Each student is different and each student learns differently. You cannot expect one student to comprehend the material the same as every other student. Some students learn best by just reading while others learn best when involved with a project. By incorporating multiple styles into one lesson, you can reach out to almost all your students.

The most successful teachers will be those that have the capability to get through to each and every student they have. Understanding the needs of each of your students will benefit not only the student but you the teacher. Having this understanding creates an approachable environment for the student, allowing the student to feel comfortable enough to ask about anything they are not comfortable with.

Involving multiple techniques into a single lesson can be a great technique to reach out to every student. After observing multiple teachers and seeing the teaching styles that were used, the involvement of multiple techniques was a common strategy used by each of these teachers. This technique was seen right away with some teachers and others it was more subtle. Each teacher involved techniques of reading, hands-on projects, group projects, and even peer discussions. Students of varying learning levels and personality types will be drawn to the approach that they understand the best.

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An Experience Worth a Golden Apple

Scott Kelley

Golden Apple Scholars Program April 2015

An Experience Worth a Golden Apple

Scott Kelley

Over the course of the last two months, I had the immense pleasure of observing several of the teachers who are the recipients of the, "Golden Apple Excellence in Teaching Award." Talking with these educators and spending but a few, mere minutes in the classroom with them it quickly became apparent why they were recognized with such a prestigious award. I saw their excellence shine in all aspects of the profession, be it in the management and administrative role of teaching to the caring and creative aspects that accompany teaching as well. With that said, as a future educator, this whole process was extremely beneficial for me as it allowed me to soak up the expertise and knowledge that these educators had to offer so that myself and other novice teachers might be able to implement these successful strategies and ideas within our own classrooms someday. The following is a brief summary of who I observed and when; as well as some of the key ideas and takeaways that stood out to me. It is my hope that what I found as enlightening and valuable, might be seen in the same regard by you.

During New Mexico State University's Spring Break on March 23rd I planned a day trip to Deming and Bayard, New Mexico. At Bataan Elementary School in Deming I observed Ms. Fisher's fourth grade class. The students were currently reading from the book, The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians # 1) by Rick Riordan. The students vocabulary set of eight words came directly from this book, but as with all new vocabulary terms, it can be difficult to adopt and engrain into one's own vocabulary repertoire. In order to fully engage and instill this newfound vocab into her students Ms.

Fisher called her students to the carpet and she taught them physical memory cues/gestures for their vocabulary terms. For example, for the vocab term descend, the students would drop lower and lower from their previous standing position. Or for the vocab word, veered the students would pretend that they were driving holding a steering wheel and then quickly turn or veer the wheel. “Comprehension strategies for kinesthetic learners involve moving their bodies in a way that maximizes the understanding and retention of a word, phrase or concept. When asked to recall vocabulary in speaking, reading or writing, they will recall what action they were performing when introduced to that particular word” (Adams, 2011). Upon going through all the vocabulary words and motions the students wrote their own definition of the word by recalling their gesture and memory cues. Alongside the definition the students added a personal illustration of the term. I was thoroughly impressed with this language arts integration as it enabled all types of learners the opportunity to grasp these words, i.e., this vocabulary strategy is a prime example of differentiated instruction.

In Bayard, New Mexico I really enjoyed observing Mrs. Lee’s 7th grade science classes. Mrs. Lee created a very engaging and entertaining atmosphere within her class that was so refreshing to observe. This atmosphere was created in large part by the responsibility of the students to complete stationed “Jobs.” The students were well trained to check their work assignments for the day and to get working at once. The jobs or crew assignments were posted at the door and worked on a rotation basis, Monday through Friday: Physics, Zoology, Horticulture, Assessment, and Meteorology. The Physics group would complete circuits and work on various electronic kits. Zoology would feed and maintain the classroom animals (there was a lot of them!). Horticulture

was responsible for watering and caring for the plants in the greenhouse. Assessment group did standardized test prep material as well as reconstructed/manipulated various science models. Lastly, Meteorology would record a weather report for the day and time and record it onto the classroom's weather log. I found these jobs to be a phenomenal use of classroom warm-up time as the students preformed their jobs with enthusiasm and professionalism; perhaps it was because they understood that these jobs were in fact a privilege. In order to have opportunity of working in these varying jobs, at the beginning of the semester Mrs. Lee "hired" her students by having them complete an application for her. This application was found in a science folder that was compiled by Mrs. Lee for her students at the beginning of the semester. With what can be seen as an extensive and resourceful syllabus, this folder included but is not limited to, what the students can expect from the class and how to complete classroom assignments over the semester (video notes, science article assignment, etc.). The folder also had a list of science standards, job descriptions and responsibilities, and vocabulary pertaining to the science method. With being so open and transparent with the students at the beginning of the semester the students can and will meet high expectations that are set for them. "When expectations are put into practice, they promote responsibility and togetherness. Things work better. People get along better. Kids can feel pride in their classroom community. Many (and I assure you, many!) behavior problems that might interfere with learning are eliminated or reduced" (Campbell, 2012). All and all, I felt that the classroom environment was well structured and the students worked together in a constructive environment in order to achieve the high set of expectations that was set for them.

I was able to chat in depth with Mrs. Pearlman on April 9th from the G.R.I.T. Academy, which is an alternative high school part of Hot Springs Academy. I was delighted to see at this Academy that students who didn't have the opportunity to graduate or receive credit for various classes, were now being given this option in this online setting to earn the credits they need. Speaking with these students it quickly became evident that the social and environmental factors accompanying high school isn't for everyone; so I was certainly glad to see that these students weren't being neglected, but instead they had a chance to succeed like their fellow peers were given. Speaking with these students every single one of them had high goals and aspirations and I wish them the best as they pursue them!

On April 10th, I had the enjoyable privilege of observing once again, both Mrs. Sandoval's second grade class and Mrs. Cordova's kindergarten class at Dona Ana Elementary School. In Mrs. Sandoval class the students read a portion of the book, Chocolate Fever by Robert Kimmel Smith in a whole group instruction configuration. Following the book the students were assigned a R.A.F.T., which is a highly creative writing strategy. R.A.F.T. stands for **R**ole of the Writer, **A**udience, **F**ormat, and **T**opic (Taylor, 2011). In this particular R.A.F.T. the students were asked to act as a physician and write a prescription, prescribing a cure for Henry Green's chocolate fever. Within this R.A.F.T, the students had to list Henry Green as the recipient of the prescription, how he was to take the medicine or be cured, when, as well as listing any possible side effects. A previous R.A.F.T assignment complete by the class was that the students wrote letters of sympathy to Henry Green pertaining his chocolate fever. In Mrs. Cordova's kinder classroom I was quite intrigued by a writing center inside the

classroom. As part of a classroom literacy station, students can sit two at a time at a table and simply write. "It is a place where students are allowed to write in a variety of forms, which include letters to friends and family, short stories, mini-books, cards, posters, and signs." The writing center is complete with numerous paper materials and writing instruments in baskets and drawers. On a bulletin board at the writing center features a plethora of examples on what student can write about and words they can use in their various writing tasks. With the above said, there truly are some fun educational experiences happening at Dona Ana Elementary School.

My last three observations I scheduled for April the 21st. I began my full day of observations by visiting Kathleen Gardner's English class at Las Cruces High School. Mrs. Gardner is a passionate teacher who I recognized immediately that she truly cares about her students. She shared with me a writing strategy/tool called SOAPSTone, which is a strategy implemented for students to make use of as they analyze written text. "SOAPSTone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) is an acronym for a series of questions that students must first ask themselves, and then answer, as they begin to plan their compositions (Morse, n.d.)." As students answer who is the speaker, the occasion, the audience, the purpose, the subject, and the tone of the piece they are reflecting upon they are then able to construct a thesis statement and consequently, a well-constructed essay. Mrs. Gardner effectively explained to me how this tool expands across subjects in that students can use SOAPSTone in any of their other classes or assessments. I was generally impressed by the student's work when using this method.

At Mayfield High School I was able to sit in on Del Hansen's Physics class. I was very excited to visit his class as I, myself have the goal and aspiration to be a high school science teacher. Sitting in his class I was entertained, as all his students were with his very energetic and comedic personality. I think what I found most effective within his teaching was the fact that he recognized the need for his students to have mental breaks or "brain breaks." So often as teachers we fight against the restlessness of our students by continuing to lecture or proceed with the lesson. Instead simply, by pausing to watch a short video, telling a story, or allowing for a brief stretch, it then allows students the opportunity to revive before being reengaged to return to the often hefty concepts and ideas that we are teaching them. "Brain Breaks are a quick and effective way of changing or focusing the physical and mental state of the learners in your group. They are also a useful tool for students to use to help activate, energize and stimulate their brains. Research indicates that brain breaks also improve students' concentration and relieve stress" ("Incorporating Brain Breaks Keeping Students Engaged," n.d.).

Conversing with Mr. Hansen I was pleasantly surprised to learn that we share a similar educational philosophy and it is my sincerest hope to be an engaging and effective teacher as he has been over the years to numerous students. In my last observation, I visited with Agriculture and Animal Sciences teacher, Mrs. O' Byrne at Mayfield High School. As I spoke with her I was astounded at her involvement within numerous programs inside and outside of the school. I really liked how she teaches, which is largely by inquiry based problems and projects. In this way she really wants students to facilitate and guide their own understanding of the content. One of the many neat tools or tricks that I found she had discovered was the use of QR codes in the classroom. QR

codes, or quick response codes allows students to scan a barcode image and immediately be directed to content. Mrs. O' Byrne created vocabulary terms and definitions QR codes and posted these around her classroom. In somewhat of a scavenger hunt fashion students will walk around the room using their phone scanning and recording the vocabulary. Numerous websites exist which will enable you to create or generate these QR codes, such as goqr.me or gogr.org. I find this tool to be an awesome resource as it alleviates a problem that many teachers face, which is the presence of cell phones in the classroom. Through use of these QR codes students would be using their phones for their instruction, instead of as a hindrance to their learning.

Overall, I'm grateful to the Golden Apple Foundation of New Mexico as it has enabled me to be more reflective of my pedagogy and improve within my own practice so that I can be a better educator to our youth. I'm so appreciative that some of New Mexico's best teachers graciously opened their classroom doors to myself and allowed me the opportunity to witness what makes great teaching, great! Observing all of these teachers has been an enjoyable and beneficial experience and I truly want to extend my gratitude to everyone involved in this opportunity.

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Literacy Toolkit

Shantel Kilkenny

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I was fortunate to be able to be part of the Golden Apple Scholars program and even more fortunate to be able to observe four amazing teachers as they worked through literacy components with their students.

The first classroom I had the opportunity to observe was Mrs. Sandoval at Dona Ana elementary. Her classroom consisted of literacy components from wall to wall as a means of decoration. As I looked around the classroom I noticed that there were many word walls, schedules, books, reading areas, and areas designated for students to write. There were also many different texts that hit a large range of reading levels available for students use. During the time that I was in the classroom, the students were working through their daily literacy component each spending time on the computers, reading, writing and working with Mrs. Sandoval. There was one station where students worked individually; they would listen to a book recording and follow along in the physical text. After completing the reading with the recording, the students would draw a picture and write briefly about the context of the book. Another station that students entered was a writing station where they were given a prompt in their journals and they were advised to write as much as they could for the duration of their time at that learning center. One area of the classroom was designated for individual silent reading where students would self-select a text and read it to themselves. After finishing one text, the students would chose another text to read, and they continued to do so until she announced that it was time for students to move to the next literacy learning center. Another literacy technique I noticed some students using was a timed reading activity with a partner. The students would time one another as they read as much as they could for a minute. Each time they rotated, the students would try to read more than they did during the previous round. The computer station had the students working on vocabulary, many of the students worked diligently as they engaged with the technology and they seemed to really enjoy the activity. The station with Mrs. Sandoval had students revisiting information from a text that they had previously read to ensure that they understood the information and that they remembered;

this period of time also gave students a chance to ask any clarifying questions about the text. I noticed that the students were also using interactive notebooks in this learning center as a means of guidance through their text. This learning center was very interactive; the students were forced to listen to one another and verbally reflect on the text.

The next classroom that I had the opportunity to observe was Mrs. Cordova, another great teacher at Dona Ana Elementary. While looking through the classroom I noticed that there was a very extensive word wall placed along the wall of the classroom. I also noticed that there was a lot of sight words posted. These elements really decorated the classroom with beneficial information that the students can benefit from. During the time that I observed this class, Mrs. Cordova was conducting a whole group reading activity where she actively engaged students in the text by asking questions and drawing students into the text by changing the tone of her voice as she read. She asked a lot of clarifying questions that ensured that all of the students were listening attentively.

The next teacher I was able to observe was Mrs. Simpson, at Arrowhead Park Early College High School. Mrs. Simpson began her class with a quick write for students to complete. She gave the students about five to seven minutes to complete the quick write. While the students wrote, she also wrote, which made the atmosphere of the classroom more welcoming and it seemed to encourage the students to work in a more focused manner. After completing the quick write, Mrs. Simpson asked for students to share if they wanted, and after two students volunteered to share she began to introduce the students to their schedule for the duration of the class period. I noticed that Mrs. Simpson gave her students a lot of choices. She noticed that many of her students had not yet completed their group newspaper assignment, so she asked for the students to give her input on what they need and how they are progressing through the assignment. After discussing the current writing assignment with the students, the class transitioned into a reading and reflection exercise where they read short poems and

then reflected on each one. The classroom is lined with student word, must-know vocabulary, and punctuation tips.

The final teacher that I was able to observe was Mrs. Gardner, a teacher at Las Cruces High School. When I walked into Mrs. Gardner's classroom the warmth of the learning environment was evident. The walls are covered with words, ideas, and concepts. The boards listed schedules and assignments in a color-coded manner. From the moment the bell rang, students were already engaged in their learning for that particular class period. The writing piece was based on, *The Twelfth Night*, by William Shakespeare, a text that has already been approached and was now being reflected on. The students were working on an adaption of the ACE strategy. The students had already begun writing the beginning components of the strategy but they were working on developing a strong argument and providing accurate evidence. As the students worked on the assignment, Mrs. Gardner made herself available to clarify any misunderstanding and preview all completed assignments. She constantly moved through the classroom to make sure that all of the students were working and on task. She gave examples of word selection that would help the students develop a stronger argument.

Throughout all of the classes I observed I noticed that all of the teachers were actively engaged and they made themselves available for students. These teachers seemed to have covered several areas of the English common core standards by engaging students in reading, writing, speaking and listening constantly.

Many components of the speaking and listening section of common core were addressed as teacher worked their way through the classroom to assist students. The elementary teachers worked with students in a group setting to individualize their learning as much as possible. I also noticed that they asked a lot of questions to help student develop a more extensive vocabulary. Both teachers were asking questions, the students were responding, and then the teachers would connect the reading to elements of everyday life to help students better understand the situations being addresses in the texts.

The high school teachers had students work more individually, but would approach each individual to assist them if needed, or just to make sure that they were engaged in the assignment. Both high school teachers challenged students to step out of their comfort zone; students were forced into a higher level of thinking after teachers worked to engage the thought process and increase complexity.

I also noticed that there was a lot of emphasis on the writing and language components of the common core standards. Across all of the grade levels I noticed that there was great value placed upon the development of writing. In the elementary, the students practiced writing individually using technology and writing journals. The students were encouraged not to focus on the grammar, spelling and punctuation as much as the content that they were transferring into a piece of writing. I found that this was a great strategy, not only for elementary students, but for students in general. Often writing is much easier when it is not censored, and it just flows with out hesitation from thought to paper. In the high school teachers helped students better their writing skills by asking clarifying questions, and encouraging students to use more extensive vocabulary that denotes their writing to be more academically suit.

Being that I am working towards a bachelor's degree in secondary education and English language arts, I was delighted to see how diligently the elementary teachers were working to help their students become avid readers and writers. It was also quite pleasant to see students in the secondary environment engaged in reading and writing and progressing through the writing process. Many of the strategies utilized by these teachers are strategies that I would use within my own classroom. Each teacher developed a set of literacy strategies that catered to the needs of their students while also following their personal classroom guidelines. I can recall several strategies that I would incorporate into my own classroom like the interactive writing journals, the word walls, the posted schedules, and the extended ACE strategy writing component. The conduction of these classrooms flowed seamlessly. I did not find any strategies that I would eliminate from the learning process but rather strategies that I

would adapt to suit the learning needs of my students or the tasks that I am trying to accomplish within my own classroom.

One concern that I do have is that the differentiated reading level materials seemed to have stopped in the elementary. In an ideal world all students will enter high school working, and learning at the same level, but realistically, Shakespearean texts can be rather difficult for students with low reading levels and some students may need more individualized assistance when trying to work with these types of texts. None of these teachers seemed to be negligent of this aspect, and all of them worked closely with students to clarify more difficult components of the reading material.

Throughout my college experience I have been exposed to some amazing ideas that incorporate the Common Core Standards into secondary level English language arts classrooms in very unique ways. Some of the texts that have really helped to guide my development in integrating the standards are, *RTI Strategies for Secondary Teachers* by Susan Gingras Fitzell, *Papers, Papers, Papers* by Carol Jago, and *(Re)Imagining Content-Area Literacy Instruction* by Roni Jo Draper. Another great source of help has been the LDC.org website, which assists teachers in the development of literacy based units.

RTI Strategies for Secondary Teachers by Susan Gingras Fitzell, is a text that helps teachers plan effective lessons. This book provides a lot of solutions to problems, rather than theory about issues that “might” arise in the classroom. This text covers material about practical interventions, lesson planning, and how to address issues beyond the walls of your classroom. The ideas presented within this text really help teachers prepare to teach effective lesson plans so that students are receiving the best education possible.

Papers, Papers, Papers by Carol Jago, helps teachers better understand the writing component of common core standards. All English teachers enter the profession knowing that they will need to assign writing assignments, but this text really helps layout how to assign these texts and how to develop writing assignments that will engage your students and benefit them beyond the four walls of the

classroom. This text really covers the writing, and language areas of common core standards, and it gives great insight for secondary teachers who fear the overwhelming amount of paper work that goes hand-in-hand with the profession.

(Re)Imagining Content-Area Literacy Instruction by Roni Jo Draper really outlines the integration of common core standards across content areas. This text not only helps teachers develop a plan of attack when having to incorporate common core standards in the classroom, but it also touches on areas that ensure that students with special needs are given equal opportunities within their learning environment. This text helps teachers develop strategies to reach out to students of all learning levels and abilities while still following the common core standard set.

LDC.org otherwise known as the Literacy Design Collaborative, is a website that helps teachers build units. This website not only forces teachers to adhere to the common core standards, but it includes all of the standards for teacher implementation within the template. I found that this was a really good resource when trying to plan long periods of teaching during my practicum experience. I was able to utilize this source to develop cohesive lesson plans that closely aligned with the common core standards already set in place.

There are a plethora of valuable resources for secondary English language arts teachers that not only help teachers plan effectively, but that also incorporate common core standards into the meat of the assignments. The ones I've listed have been very useful in my experience and I will continue to utilize them in my own classroom.

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