



Department of Elementary Education

December 2014

## *Department News*

**Teacher of the Year:** Concept Schools' annual Teacher of the Year program continues to draw the best and brightest teachers throughout our network. Anyone can nominate a teacher (even a colleague!) The Concept Schools Teacher of the Year will also serve a community point person who both promotes charter community schools and innovative teaching strategies. He or she will receive a \$1000 monetary award for this recognition.

<http://www.conceptschools.org/teacher-of-the-year/>

The deadline for nominating a teacher is February 27, 2015.

The deadline for applications is April 17, 2015.

The winner will be announced on May 21, 2015.

**History Heroes:** The Concept program History Heroes is designed to promote success in and out of the classroom. We want to recognize students acting as civics leaders in their communities or schools, and students who are going above and beyond in their social studies classrooms. To nominate a student go to <http://socialstudies.conceptschools.org/history-hero/>.

## *Curriculum Updates*

Unit 4 for 1<sup>st</sup> grade is finished and Unit 4 for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be finished in the next week. Both will be available on Concept SIS shortly. Unit 4 for Kindergarten and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will be ready after the winter break. Please contact the Department of Elementary Education if you need a preview of the outline or any additional resources.

## *Free?!*

**Storyline Online:** SAG (Screen Actor's Guild) has presented this site where famous actors read very famous books. What child wouldn't love hearing Darth Vader (James Earl Jones) read *To Be a Drum*? Students are not able to see the text but they can see a great video of all the illustrations.

<http://www.storylineonline.net/>

**Into the Book:** Students read short passages and practice comprehension strategies. For instance, to practice the skill of visualizing, students read the short story and then have access to digitally "draw what they see in their mind."

<http://reading.ecb.org/>

## **National Geographic Young Explorer:**

National Geographic offers past issues of their Young Explorer line for free online! Simply click open the magazine and it displays the pages for students to read. They even offer a feature that reads the text aloud!

<http://ngexplorer.cengage.com/ngyoungexplorer/moreissues.html>

**Read Works:** This non-profit site provides research-based units, lessons, and authentic, leveled non-fiction and literary passages directly to educators online, for free, to be shared broadly. One of the best features of this site is that they offer leveled reading passages, complete with lexile and the ability to sort by grade and subject/strand.

<http://www.readworks.org/>

## **Contact Information:**

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## *Enhancing Your Shared Reading Experience...*

By Jennifer Sajovec

So your shared reading consists of reading book to your students and working on comprehension. Or maybe you read a poem where students chime in on the rhyming words. That's enough for a "shared reading" experience, right? If this is all you do, as many of us have done in the past, we are selling the shared reading opportunity short.

### **Key Components of Shared Reading**

1. Same text for all students.
2. Based on curriculum. Content related
3. Multiple reading of the same text
4. Variety of text types

#### **Component #1: Same text for all students.**

As early elementary educators, we are encouraged to meet students at their current reading level and gradually move them into more difficult texts. The problems lies in that some students may never reach grade level or even near grade level.

We can still use leveled-texts during guided reading but we should regularly use grade-level or even above grade level texts during shared reading. Carefully scaffolded activities as well as a different level of expectations for "independent" reading allows students to build comfortability with a more difficult text.

#### **Component #2: Cover texts based on current curriculum content.**

With so many standards and so little time, teachers can't afford to just randomly select a text. Common Core has asked for disciplinary literacy, meaning students need to know how to read and write about what they are learning. The majority of shared reading experiences can be about topics related to math, science, social studies and even art or music.

#### **Component #3: Multiple readings of the same text.**

Close reading requires teachers and students to read the same text a few times. Although individual formats may differ, a sample shared reading experience may go like this:

1. Introduce the text and help student activate and develop schema for the topic.
2. First Reading- Teacher reads the text fluently from beginning to end.
3. Second Reading- Students are invited to choral read or partner read the text.
4. Annotating the text- Students use a copy of the text to make their own notes. Simple version of text annotation are available
5. Discussion- Students discuss their notes from above and check for understanding with each other. . Teacher assesses student understanding through the discussion to further refine her modeling.  
**\*Note:** There is huge emphasis here on the speaking and listening standards. Students should use such strategies as turn and talk or revolving circles to dialogue with other students.
6. Third Reading-Students should independently (or with another student) reading the text themselves.
7. Comprehension practice-Students should be given the opportunity to practice using any content they gained from reading the text. Such activities can include journal writing, completing a graphic organizer or simply recording their notes to use in another formal writing activity.

#### **Component #4: Use a variety of text types.**

Many of us resort to pulling out a storybook or even a non-fiction trade book. Yet, we can take the shared reading experience even further. Teachers have used very creative "texts" for their close reading activities. Learning to read and gather information from a website is a huge task students must learn. Don't forget to expose students to close reading activities using poetry possibly paired with artwork. Even reading a recipe or assembly directions are important tasks to share during a close reading activity.

