

Teacher Feature

By

Stephanie Sheir

E-Mail: S.Sheir@dadeschools.net

Virginia A. Boone Highland Oaks Elementary School
20500 N.E. 24th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33180

Mail Code 2441
School Telephone (305) 931-1770
School Fax (305) 936-5722

For information concerning IMPACT II opportunities, Adapter and Disseminator grants, please contact:

The Education Fund
305-892-5099, Ext. 18
e-mail: Ivalle@educationfund.org
web site: www.educationfund.org

Table of Contents

I. Goals	Page 1
II. Objectives	Pages 2-7
III. Course Outline	Pages 8-9
IV. Lesson Plans	Page 10
V. Resource List	Page 11

Goals

The primary goal of *Teacher Feature* is improving a child's self-concept while reinforcing the skills for writing a friendly letter. Every child feels special when they read the letters that their classmates have written to them.

Students will develop effective writing skills. FCAT writing will be incorporated as the children get experience in writing detailed sentences which express feeling and appeal to the senses. Students will use strategies to support ideas in writing by elaborating upon an idea and using specific word choice and relevant details such as reasons or examples.

As each student reads his entire booklet of feature letters from every student in the class, he/she will develop vocabulary by reading independently for pleasure. In addition, he/she will use a variety of structural cues to decode unfamiliar words. As the child is using decoding strategies and context clues, he/she will be practicing skills that meet grade level expectations for the Sunshine State Standards.

Objectives

All objectives were taken from the Florida Department of Education's Grade Level Expectations for the Sunshine State Standards.

Language Arts – Second Grade

Generates ideas before writing on self-selected topics and assigned tasks

Focuses on a central idea and groups related ideas.

Writes legibly.

Writes for a specific audience.

Uses strategies to support ideas in writing (including but not limited to using several sentences to elaborate upon an idea; using specific word choice and relevant details such as reasons or examples).

Evaluates own and other's writing (for example, determining how own writing achieves its purposes, asking questions, making comments, responding constructively to other's comments, helping classmates apply conventions)

Revises writing to improve supporting details and word choice by adding or substituting text.

Spells frequently used words correctly.

Uses references to edit writing (for example, word lists, dictionaries, charts).

Uses conventions of punctuation (including but not limited to periods, question marks, exclamation points; commas in dates, series of words, and in greetings and closing in letters).

Capitalizes initial words of sentences, the pronoun "I", and proper nouns.

Revises and edits for sentence structure and age-appropriate usage (including nouns, action verbs, adjectives, adverbs).

Uses strategies to “finish” a piece of writing (for example, incorporating illustrations, photos, charts, and graphs; prepares a final copy).

Uses effective word choice in written work to tell about experiences (including but not limited to anecdotal detail and figurative language such as similes).

Language Arts – Third Grade

Focuses on a central idea or topic

Uses an effective organizational pattern and substantial support to achieve a sense of completeness or wholeness.

Uses effective sentence variety.

Generally follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization and spelling appropriate at third grade or higher level.

Uses principles of agreement in written work (including but not limited to verb tenses, plurals of common irregular nouns, comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs).

Uses creative writing strategies appropriate to the format (for example, using appropriate voice; using descriptive language to clarify ideas and create vivid images; using elements of style such as appropriate tone).

Writes for a variety of occasions, audiences, and purposes (for example, letters to invite or thank, stories or poems to entertain, information to record).

Generally chooses specific detail and adequate word choice to support the story line.

Develops supporting ideas with information that relates to the focus.

Begins to present facts and examples objectively.

Attempts to use a variety of sentence structures to present ideas.

Language Arts – Fourth Grade

Establishes a purpose for writing (including but not limited to explaining, informing, telling a story, making a request).

Focuses on a central idea or topic (for example, excluding loosely related, extraneous, or repetitious information).

Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to purpose and audience.

Uses devices to develop relationships among ideas for example, transitional devices; paragraphs that show a change in time, idea, or place; cause-and-effect relationships).

Uses supporting ideas, details, and facts from a variety of sources to develop and elaborate the topic.

Uses an effective organizational pattern and substantial support to achieve a sense of completeness or wholeness (for example, considering audience, choosing effective words, sequencing events; using specific details to clarify meaning).

Uses varied sentence structures.

Generally follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization and spelling appropriate at fourth-grade or higher level.

Uses a variety of strategies (For example, base words and common spelling patterns) and resources (such as dictionaries and thesauruses) to spell words.

Uses conventions of punctuation (including but not limited to commas in a series, dates, and addresses; beginning and ending quotation marks).

Uses creative writing strategies appropriate to the format (for example, using appropriate voice; using descriptive language to clarify ideas and create vivid images; using elements of style, such as appropriate tone).

Writes for a variety of occasions, audiences, and purposes (for example, journals to reflect upon ideas, reports to describe scientific observations).

Creates a central focus through the use of suspense, humor, creativity, or fantasy.

Creates a sense of story completeness.

Generally presents facts, examples, and definitions objectively.

Uses appropriate expository transitions to relate ideas within and between paragraphs.

Language Arts – Fifth Grade

Uses a variety of strategies to prepare for writing (for example, brainstorming, making lists, mapping, outlining, grouping related ideas, using graphic organizers, taking notes).

Establishes a purpose for writing (including but not limited to informing, entertaining, and explaining).

Focuses on a central idea or topic (for example, excludes loosely related, extraneous, or repetitious information).

Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to purpose and audience.

Uses devices to develop relationships among ideas (for example, transitional devices; paragraphs that show a change in time, idea, or place; cause-and-effect relationships).

Uses supporting ideas, details, and facts from a variety of sources to develop and elaborate the topic.

Uses an effective organizational pattern and substantial support to achieve a sense of completeness or wholeness.

Uses varied sentence structures.

Generally follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate at fourth-grade or higher.

Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to purpose and audience (including but not limited to topic sentences, supporting sentences, and sequence; develops new ideas in separate paragraphs; concludes with effectiveness).

Uses devices to develop relationships among ideas (for example, transitional devices, paragraphs that show a change in time, idea, or place; cause-and-effect relationships).

Uses supporting ideas, details, and facts from a variety of sources to develop and elaborate the topic.

Uses an effective organizational pattern and substantial support to achieve a sense of completeness or wholeness (for example, considering audience, sequencing events, choosing effective words; using specific details to clarify meaning).

Uses varied sentence structures.

Generally follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate at fifth-grade or higher level.

Revises draft to further develop a piece of writing by adding, deleting, and rearranging ideas and details.

Uses strategies to spell words (for example, using resources such as dictionary or thesaurus to confirm spelling).

Uses conventions of punctuation (including but not limited to commas in a series, dates, and addresses; beginning and ending quotation marks; hyphens in compound words).

Uses conventions of capitalization (including but not limited to the names of organizations, nationalities, races, languages, and religions; the heading, salutation, and closing of a letter).

Uses various parts of speech correctly in written work (including but not limited to using objective and subjective case pronouns, using singular and plural possessive forms of nouns, using common and proper nouns, using correct forms of adjectives, verbs, and adverbs).

Evaluates own and other's writing (for example, identifying the best features of a piece of writing, determining how own writing achieves its purpose, asking for feedback, responding to classmate's writing).

Uses creative writing strategies appropriate to the format (for example, letters to persuade or request, humorous or suspenseful stories to entertain, instructions to inform).

Exhibits a consistent awareness of topic with no irrelevant information.

Writes for a variety of occasions, audiences, and purposes (for example, letters to persuade or request, humorous or suspenseful stories to entertain)

Presents facts, examples, and definitions objectively.

Uses a variety of sentence structures to reinforce ideas.

Course Outline

Teacher feature is a program that I implement throughout the year. I usually start the program in late September or early October. This gives the children time to get to know their classmates so that they will be able to write a letter to each member of their class. I do journal writing Monday through Thursday at the beginning of the day. On Friday morning we do our feature writing. Each child in the class will be featured during the course of the school year. I usually alternate a boy one week and a girl the following week. The children know that they will be featured and look forward to the Friday that their name will be on the board. Sometimes I feature them around the time of their birthday, or sometimes just because they have shown great progress that particular week.

When a child is featured I write the date on the board and “Dear _____,” Each child in the class then writes a detailed letter to that child describing what they like about the child and why they are happy that they are a classmate. This year one of my second grade girls wrote the following: 12/8/03

“Dear Ali,

When I came to Mrs. Sheir’s class you were so nice to me and you still are. You share with me and you sometimes sit next to me at lunch. You are a great friend to me. You also help people when they need help.

From,

Hayley Tartell”

This letter is written on a sheet of notebook paper. The child illustrates the letter. I encourage them to use crayons or markers to make it colorful. Each child pastes their photo on their letter. This year was the first year in the five years that I have been doing this feature that a photo was included on each feature letter. A parent volunteered to take these photos and make copies. This year I plan to do this myself. I also write a letter to the child. I put my letter at the end of the packet. I make a cover for the booklet out of one large sheet of construction paper folded in half. I summarize what all the letters say in a paragraph on the cover. Sometimes children volunteer to decorate the cover. I then staple the booklet together.

What is so amazing about this feature booklet is how it affects not only the child who is featured but also his entire family. Students can't believe that some small thing that they have done has made an impact on one or more children in their class. They are also often surprised with how well they are respected and liked by their peers. One parent once responded to me in this way. "I was in tears when I read each feature letter. I can't believe how amazing this is. We will treasure this. Thank you so much!"

Lesson Plans

Objective: The student will practice skills for writing a friendly letter.

Sunshine State Standards: Uses strategies to support ideas in writing (including but not limited to using several sentences to elaborate upon an idea; using specific word choice and relevant details such as reasons or examples).

Materials: Each child has a sheet of notebook paper, a pencil, crayons or markers, scissors and a glue stick.

Activity: Each child writes a letter to the student who is being featured. They think about all the things they like about the child and try to express these thoughts in detailed sentences. They then illustrate their letter with crayons or markers and paste their photo on the page. The photo may need to be cut, depending on the space left on the page.

The teacher collects the letters and proof reads them. She can then call children up to write corrections, or put little post its on their page with suggested corrections. When all letters are completed, they are stapled together with the teacher's letter in a booklet. The cover of the booklet is a sheet of construction paper folded in half. I write a short summary of the class letters on the cover. I ask children in the class if they want to help illustrate the cover. The child who is being featured can pick a friend to illustrate the cover. If the teacher does not have a break during the day to put the booklet together, then the child could receive their completed feature booklet on the next school day.

Resource List

Websites for additional information on letter writing

<http://web.syr.edu/~crzufelt/rubric1.html>

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/03/lp326-05.shtml/29k