

3rd ELA Reading
Materials Interview

Interviewer: Please describe the instructional materials you're using for class.

Teacher: Well, the only real material ... We have our books, the class set of books, which I got donated to us and then I have that literature circles expectations paper that I use a reminder in guidelines for the groups, otherwise, it was just having those set expectations in place. I have those materials already made and have the books already, so as far as prepping and everything, it was done, ready to go.

Interviewer: Why did you choose these materials? What materials are they maybe too?

Teacher: The book is *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin and I chose this story, even though it's a little higher than third grade, I chose this story because it's one of the ... Now I can't think of what it's called. In the common core, it's one of the recommended books. What is it called? They have a saying for their type of books but it was one of the recommended books and then we created a lesson, a unit around the one book, so that's why I chose this book. I also have some of her books that we go into book clubs after this that we read so it's an author study book club.

Then I chose the literature circle tool because it has the guidelines that we obviously go over verbally and we have them in place as part of our normal structure but it's as a reminder for the students. It helps the leaders in the groups have a reference if they're feeling like they don't want to tell the rest of their group what to do. They have that. They can say, "Look. This is what we're supposed to be doing." It helps the students be more of a leader, if maybe they're a student that struggles with being a leader.

Interviewer: What is it you like about these materials?

Teacher: I like the book because it's engaging. It's exciting. The students are into it. I think it has that small connection to Hawaiian culture that makes it relatable for them and the adventure. The adventure is what grabs their attention. There's also built-in folk tales so it ties into the standards but also introduces the culture aspects into it and the folk tales are fun for the kids because it has the magic in it and it's exciting. The story itself, it pulls the kids and makes them want to read every day. They love it and then ... What was the question? Sorry.

Interviewer: Why you like them?

Teacher: I like the handout because it's just a reminder. It takes a little off of me because I'm working with the group that they have that visually in front of them, the expectations. It helps me not have to get up from my group so much to remind them of the expectations because it's right there in front of them. Because we use it every day, it's known. It's there. I think it takes a little bit off of my plate so I like

having that as their guidelines, right there, clearly stated in front of them. There's no wondering of, "Are we allowed to do this?" or "What exactly are we supposed to do?" It's right there, laid out, and it makes it an opportunity for me to get to work with a small group and not be interrupted.

Interviewer: I also noticed a support personnel.

Teacher: Yes, I get a support personnel for 45 minutes of the whole day so I chose to use it for reading. We get to choose how we want to use that and I just use it to help meet my ... There's one group of kids who couldn't read this book on their own so either they'll work with me or her and it allows other groups to be meeting with the teacher. That way, I'm not only working with my lowest group. I'm working with every group at least once a week so having her in the room makes that possible.

[00:04:00] I could do it without her but I don't think I'd be able to meet every group once a week because I'd still be struggling with my lowest group being able to read. There's ways I could go about it. I could record myself reading and have an iPad playing for them but because I have the luxury of having 45 minutes of an adult, I use it for this time.

Interviewer: Are there any changes you'd make to the materials?

Teacher: I've adapted them. This is my third year doing this unit so I didn't start with the literature circles expectations in front to them. I just started trying out literature circles and going over what I expected but I found that that material ... I found the material online and changed it a little bit to meet what our goals were in the class and it's helped take a lot ... Like I said, it takes more off of me, the kids needing clarifying questions that's right there in front of them. I've changed that as I've gone through but as of right now, I like where it's at.

I do have to, which I think you say today, I have to check on the kids with the summaries because I leave it open ended for them, how they want to do it. There's kids who get it and can do a summary straight to the point and be done right away and there's some kids who need to look back through the book. I've had to change that a little bit and the fact that knowing some of the kids are probably going to write one sentence per chapter and there's some kids who can do it quickly and get it.

There's other students who are going to need a lot more time to work on it. I give them time for that during the day where they can catch up or ask them. It's good that they're looking back in the book because that's a skill that they need for test taking and in life to know that it's not cheating to look in the story to remember what you just read or to give yourself help with details. Having that for their summaries helps them and I've had to adapt that a little.

Interviewer: Finally, how would you describe these materials as meaningful or relevant?

Teacher: The book is meaningful and relevant because like I said, it connects to them a little bit with the culture and they're excited about it. They want to read it so that makes it meaningful for the students, the story. I think it's meaningful because they know how much I like the story so it gets them excited. We've even had that in here. I'm a Harry Potter fan and I have the books in here. Only some of the kids can read them in third-grade level but I find that that's probably the most popular checked-out book because they know that I'm into it. I have a bucket that says, "Miss [Keenan's 00:06:18] favorite." That's my old name. Teacher's favorite. I need to change that and those are my most checked-out books.

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I know right away when they see that I'm interested in something, that they're interested in it. I think how excited I get about this book before we start creates that buy-in. They don't even really know what's it's going to be about and they're excited about it. Because it's the third year I've done, there's been siblings in the class or just the buzz around school, the kids being so excited, that they come into this grade knowing that they're going to get to read this book and it's a rite of passage for them, like, "Oh, we get to read that story that everybody talks about." That makes it meaningful for them and makes them want to read it.

I think having the leader in the group makes it meaningful also because they're excited to take that leadership role on and they have that tool that helps them be a leader. That makes them invested in it and gives them that responsibility when they're in the group. They don't have to have it every day because we rotate but it's exciting for them to have that day of being a leader. That tool helps them be a leader.

Interviewer: Maybe is there one example from the text that maybe connected to local Hawaiian culture?

Teacher: The Chinese culture, they have some of the foods that she's eating in it. The kids are like, "Oh, I've ate that before," or what else has been related? Some of the things like the material she takes on her journey, she has a rice bowl and chopsticks and she uses it make ... uses her rice bowl and chopsticks, bamboo sticks, basically chopsticks, to make a compass. We've related it, like with our map, we put a compass on our map. We learn about the compass so trying to relate it that way. Also, in some of the folk tales, there's the family values that are in there, things that they have at home or with their grandma and grandpa, their relationships there.

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What else? There's a lot of connections in there. I'm trying to think other things. Even we went on field trips to see Chinatown and Chinese new year and having the symbols of the dragon and all of that kind of stuff. We've made things in class that connect to it so they see it around in Honolulu and they see it around on TV so that's why I like doing it third quarter too is the Chinese new year connection because a lot of people will celebrate it here. There's been mochi in the story. The

kids will talk about how they make it for new year's.

Even just basic connections anybody could make. Today we had connections with they were remembering the good things about their daughter because she was gone and we talked about, "Have you ever had somebody pass away?" You talk about the good things that you remember or the fun memories. There was a couple of kids today that had that connection so not just the culture but also just everyday life connections that they can make, that any kid could make.