

Empowered Voices: Boosting English Literacy through Student Stories

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Session Outcomes

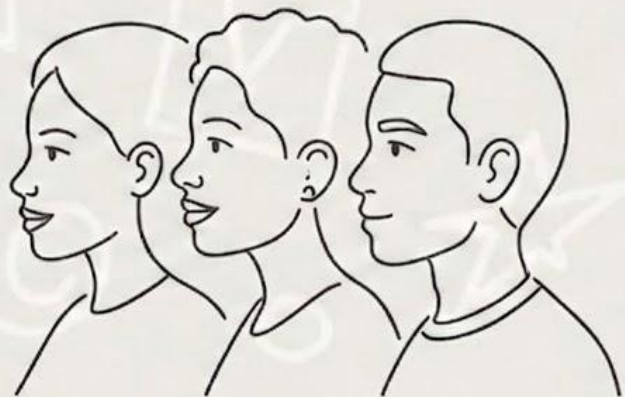
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✓ Explain how personal narrative writing supports English literacy and student identity.
- ✓ Adapt an immigration-story framework for Grades 3–12.
- ✓ Design a scaffolded unit outline integrating reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Empathetic Inquiry: Student Stories

What **stories** do your students **wish adults understood** about them?

Uncovering the often-invisible experiences of our learners.



Why Student Stories Matter

Literacy + Identity + Belonging

CREATE MEANINGFUL
REASONS TO USE
LANGUAGE



SUPPORT IDENTITY
AFFIRMATION



STUDENT
STORYTELLING
CAN:



BUILD VOCABULARY
& ORAL LANGUAGE



STRENGTHEN
WRITING
FLUENCY



INCREASE
ENGAGEMENT
& MOTIVATION



A Safe & Inclusive Approach

Important Considerations

- ✓ Their own immigration story
- ✓ A family migration story
- ✓ A movement or transition story
- ✓ A community story of change

Key Principle

Student choice matters.



We honor lived experiences without requiring disclosure.

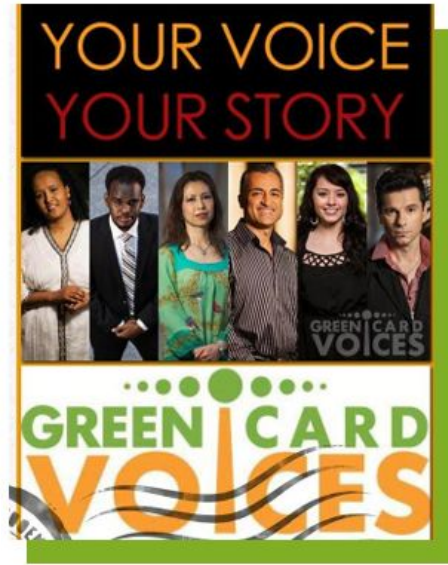
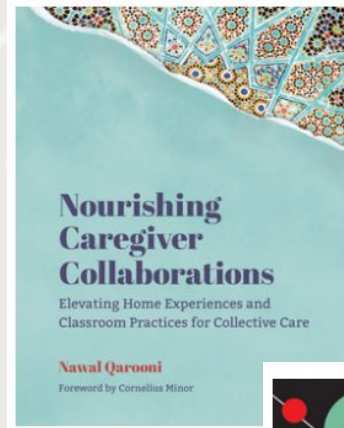


RESOURCES



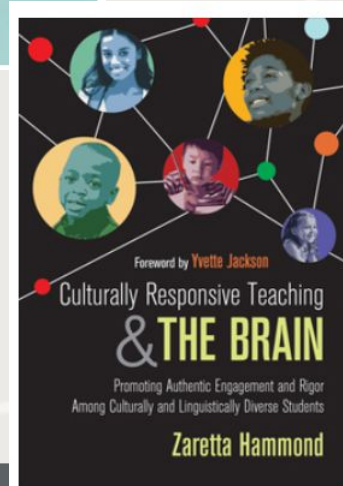
Global Educator Lesson Plan

 **NC GLOBAL
EDUCATION**
NC Department of Public Instruction



NAELPA Q4 Webinar: Building Resilient Communities

The Power of Immigrant Stories





**My hopes when
immigrating were...**

THE WRITING FRAMEWORK

My Immigration Story: 'I Am...'



1. Cause: Why we immigrated



2. Effect: What changed



3. Challenges: Obstacles faced



4. Hopes: Dreams and goals



5. Emotions: Feelings experienced

Literacy Skills Embedded in the Framework

Writing Element	Literacy Skill
Cause	Cause/effect language
Effect	Sequencing and elaboration
Challenges	Descriptive language
Hopes	Future tense and speaking
Emotions	Vocabulary development

Experience the Lesson as a Student

Mentor Text

Hi, my name is Vandi and I was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone. There was a war in my home country, so we had to leave. When I was six, my family was living in a refugee camp in Liberia, which is a country that neighbors Sierra Leone. We were picked by some officials there to come to America. I was really sad because I had to leave my family and friends; I will not get to see them again until I am grown and can go back to Liberia as an adult.

UNIT OVERVIEW: 5-PART UNIT SEQUENCE



1. IDENTITY: "I AM..."

Explore personal identity, values, and defining characteristics.



2. CAUSE & EFFECT

Understand relationships, actions, reactions, and logical flow.

3. CHALLENGES & EMOTIONS



Navigate obstacles, feelings, conflict, and personal growth.

4. HOPES & DREAMS



Envision future aspirations, goals, and possibilities.



5. PUBLISHING THE STORY



Synthesize and share the creative narrative.

Lesson 1: Identity — “I Am...”

Literacy Goal: Oral language + descriptive writing

ACTIVITIES



1. Background Knowledge



2. Note Taking



3. Language/Culture Portraits



4. Partner Sharing

LANGUAGE SUPPORTS



Sentence frames



Visuals



Videos



Graphic Organizers

Identity Map: What Shapes Who We Are?

Create a Quick Identity Map of Your Cultural Anchors

Think about the people, traditions, experiences, and places that have shaped who you are.

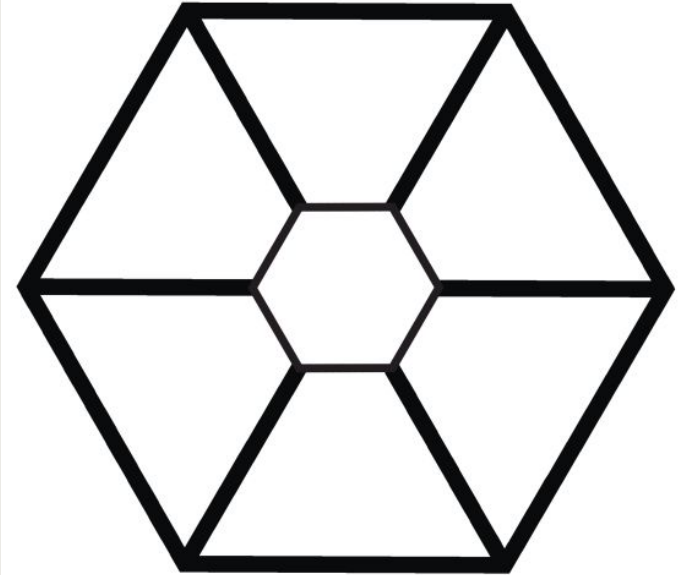
In the center of your page, write:

I AM...

HEXAGONAL THINKING



**WE ARE ALL
CONNECTED**



Student Instructions: Language & Culture Portrait

1 List Your Heritage

- Brainstorm your languages and cultures.

2 Color Code

- Review your final list.
- Pick a different color for each.
- Create a color key.

3 Map Your Body

- Get a body silhouette sheet.
- Color the body using your key.

4 Share and Reflect



Lesson 2: Cause & Effect

Literacy Goal: Academic language + sentence complexity

ACTIVITIES



1. Cause/effect graphic organizer



2. Oral rehearsal



3. Mentor text analysis

Sentence Stem 1



One reason
my family
immigrated
was...

Sentence Stem 2

___ is __ me
because ____.

He/she is ___
than me
because ____.

Lesson 3: Challenges & Emotions

Literacy Goal: Vocabulary + expressive language

ACTIVITIES



1. Emotion vocabulary bank



2. Journaling

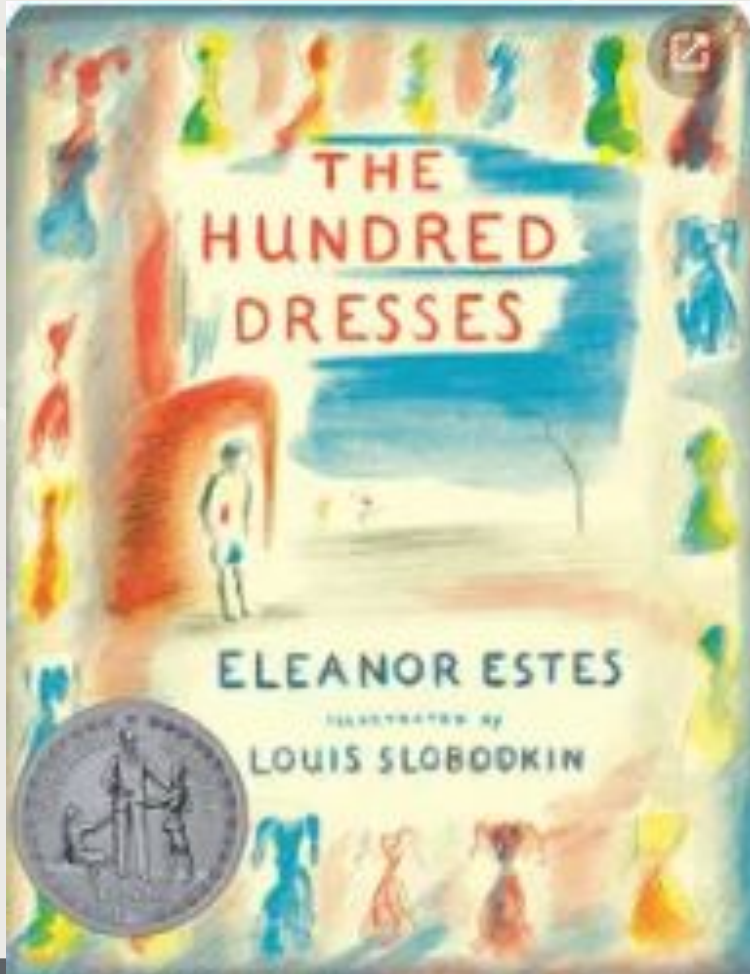


3. Collaborative discussion

Sentence Stem



A challenge I experienced was...



Sample prompts:
A challenge I experienced
was...

Before I left, I thought....

Now that I am here, I feel....

Lesson 4: Hopes & Dreams

Literacy Goal: Future tense + speaking skills

ACTIVITIES



1. Goal setting



2. Interviews



3. Hope statements

Sentence Stem



One hope we had
was...

Lesson 5: Publishing the Story

Literacy Goal: Revision + presentation

ACTIVITIES



1. Self-revision and Peer feedback



2. Presentation practice



3. Creating the final draft

Publishing Ideas



✓ Class anthology



✓ Author's chair



✓ Digital storytelling



✓ Gallery walk



✓ Family literacy night

Adapting Across Grade Levels

Grades 3–5



Visuals



Sentence frames



Illustrated timelines

Grades 6–8



Paragraph writing



Family interviews



Collaborative writing

Grades 9–12



Memoir writing



Historical connections



Research integration

Scaffolds for Multilingual Learners

High-Leverage Supports



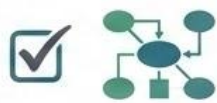
Sentence frames



Partner talk



Home language supports



Graphic organizers



Graphic organizers



Vocabulary supports



Mentor texts



Oral rehearsal


Which scaffold would most benefit your students?

Now It's Your Turn...

Work Time: Build Your Unit Plan


1. Brainstorm: Identify the best context for an “I am” unit.


2. Build: Launch your planning using the template.


 Grade Level


 Essential Question

 Texts/Resources

 Language Objectives

 Content Objectives

 Scaffolds

 Final Product

Visible Stories

Exit Reflection: One way I can make stories more visible is...



Final Thoughts

Language grows when students have meaningful reasons to communicate.

When students tell their stories, literacy becomes personal, purposeful, and empowering.



Thanks for your time and attention.

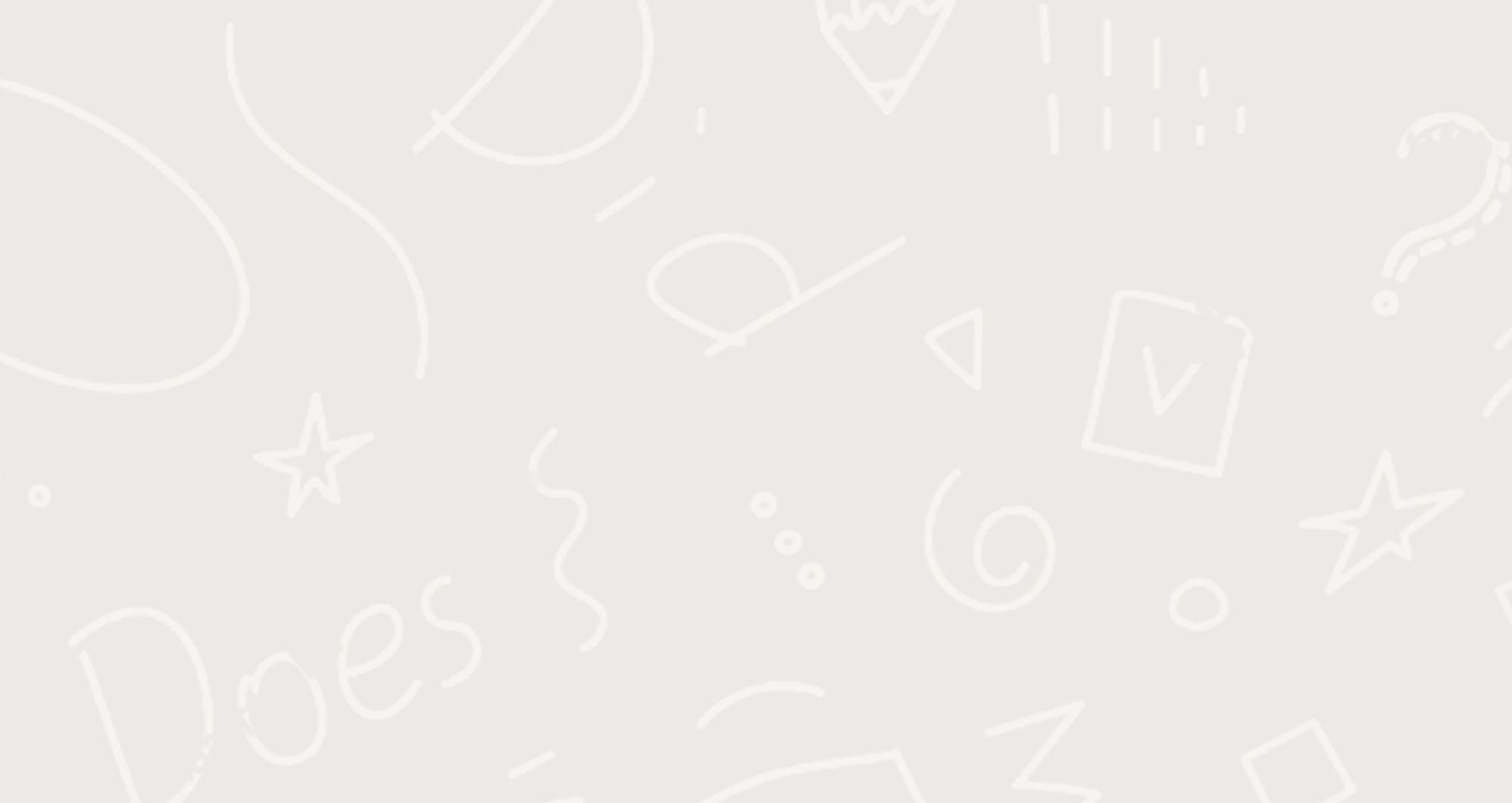
Want to collaborate or have questions?
Email: dskelly@parkwayschools.net

**Your Feedback
is Important!**



Please take a
moment to fill out this
session survey.





Does

