

Shared Research Projects / Los proyectos de investigación compartidos

CCSS: RI.1-10, RF.1, RF.3, W.2, W.7, W.8, SL.1-6, L.1, L.2, L.4-6

Preschool Foundations: Listening & Speaking: 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 3.0, 3.1, 3.2; Reading: 1.0, 1.1, 1.2; 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.0, 4.2; Writing: 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

Summary

Shared research projects are an opportunity for students to collaboratively engage with complex text while researching a topic of choice. Scaffolding through teacher guidance and gradual release is built into this experience to enable all students to participate fully. Through the process, children learn the skills required to effectively comprehend informational text on a grade level topic.

Implementation

Shared Research Projects typically occur once the class is about mid-way through a thematic unit of study. By this time, students have been exposed to the background concepts and vocabulary related to the theme. At this time, students are immersed in the unit and are beginning to develop interests related to the theme that they would like to pursue. For example, in a first grade unit on the Rainforest, through the use of strategies such as Draw & Label, Narrative Input, read alouds, and graphic organizers, students would learn general information about the Rainforest, where it is located, the layers of the Rainforest, and know of many of the plants and animals found in that biome. The class learned about the sloth and the jaguar in depth, understanding concepts such as diet, external parts and behaviors that help them survive, and inheritance of these traits. At this point, the teacher can provide options for children to select an organism they would like to research further.

For Shared Research Projects, the teacher carefully predetermines topics for the children to select. When determining topics, the teacher should take into consideration a variety that will provide opportunity for compare and contrast, as well as the interests of the students in his/her classroom.

Once students have selected their topics, teachers will pull small research groups, one at a time, to learn about their topic of choice. A graphic organizer should be selected and prepared to guide the students' research, indicating which information the students should research. For example, students could be provided with one row of the Categorical Matrix:

Organism/ Classification	Habitat	Diet	External Parts	Survival Behaviors	Interesting Facts

In an Economy unit in which students are learning about producers and consumers, the teacher might choose a graphic organizer that provides an opportunity for students to explore cause & effect related to a particular product. To begin, the teacher presents the graphic organizer to the students and asks the students to make predictions. To provide ample support for English Learners, the teacher also shows some pictures related to the topic and engages the children in using some of the vocabulary they will come across in the texts they are about to read.

The teacher then leads the students to begin researching the topic through preselected texts and resources. These texts come from a variety of sources: books, textbooks, teacher generated text, and media such as video clips and online resources. Select print resources are photocopied so the students can highlight and sketch on the page. As the teacher and students research together, the teacher is asking the students text dependent questions, and students are encouraged to take notes and sketch (sketching encouraged at all ages) on the text itself or in their Academic Process Journal.

The teacher is mindful to discuss the text structure, academic language, and features that are specific to that piece of text. Students are encouraged to be mindful of illustrations and the information that they provide. Research teams are guided to compare and contrast the information provided by the various resources. In TK and the beginning of Kinder, this is a combination of shared reading and interactive writing. In other words, the text is big enough for the small group to see it, and the students share the highlighter with the teacher as they read the text. From mid-Kinder and beyond, students have their own copy of the text on which they can highlight and sketch while reading with the research group. Beginning in 2nd grade, students are taught to refer to the text as the basis for answers to questions.

As the research group is reading, the teacher guides them to complete the graphic organizer referencing the resources and their Academic Process Journal. At the earliest grades, this is done through the use of shared or interactive writing on a large graphic organizer. Once mid-way through kinder, students are given their own graphic organizer to record the information, and sketching is encouraged at all grade levels. For older students in 2nd and 3rd grade, some of the work of researching and recording can be done in research teams with minimal teacher guidance.

The teacher then determines the next steps for the Shared Research Projects. Research teams could prepare a collaborative written piece, an oral presentation including drawings and photos, and/or individual informational text.

Notes on Strategy

