

Persevering Despite Obstacles

4th grade

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I. Thematic Framework

A. Central Questions:

Life is never as easy as it should be, and when times are challenging, people need to persevere despite the obstacles in their path. This unit will help students understand that they have the strength to persevere by answering the following questions:

1. What does perseverance mean to you?
2. Do you know anyone (including yourself) who has persevered despite obstacles; if so how?
3. What skills, traits or support systems did they have that enabled them to persevere?

B. Rationale:

When initially planning for my themed literature unit, I believed that the idea of “Persevering Despite Obstacles,” would help my students understand more deeply the social studies unit “Northwest Explorers and Fur Traders.” Now, this unit will not be attached to my social studies unit, but rather follow it. This is due to the fact that I will be teaching in two, three week blocks. The first block will consist of teaching writing for two hours a day—one hour to my students, and the second to the other fourth grade class. During this block, I will focus on teaching my social studies unit during the reading time period. The second block I will be teaching two math periods in a similar structure. In the afternoon, I will use the time I have for reading to teach this themed literature unit. Although this unit is not linked to my social studies unit, it will carry over themes. The social studies unit is about early explorers to the Northwest, including Lewis and Clark and fur trappers. Many of these early explorers displayed perseverance despite obstacles. One way I will continue exploring these ideas is to offer my students books written about this time period (see thematic book and resource list). When building understanding of the theme, I will ask students to think back to the social studies unit in order to make connections.

Although this unit is not attached to my social studies unit, I believe that this TLU will help my students’ conceptual understanding of perseverance. This will aid my students, and I sincerely hope, strengthen their resolve when they encounter obstacles in their own lives. In addition, I believe that the structure I have been given (two, three week blocks) will bring more enjoyment to the unit. This is because the assessments I will be using are simple and straightforward and don’t require extra work for the students. This will allow the students to concentrate on reading, understanding, and discussing their story with their group. Focusing on the story and discussing it in groups, I believe will inspire my students to continue to read and think about literature. When planning and looking for books, I wanted to make sure I gave my students choices that showed multiple perspectives in order for them to see that all people have similar

experiences. Viewing the world through multiple perspectives I believe will help my students become moral and ethical citizens.

Lastly, this unit connects with many important EALR's in reading, writing, and communication. In reading, this unit relates to several of the GLE's addressed in EALR 2, which relates to comprehension. Writing EALR's addressed include 1 and 3. These EALR's speak to the students' ability to understand and use the writing process clearly and effectively. EALR's one and two, within the communication framework, relate to listening, observing, and communicating effectively to gain understanding. Taken all together these EALR's create a web, where the student is learning by reading, listening and writing, therefore constructing their own knowledge. This is key to what I wanted to accomplish when planning this unit.

II. Learners:

I will be teaching this unit to a group of diverse learners. Students vary in ethnicity; there are students of Asian, African, Bosnian, and Native American, as well as Caucasian and African-American decent. Academically, these students vary in their abilities. The range is from a first grade to high fifth grade reading level. The class has four students on IEP's, and five others who qualify for Title I. This year Ridgcrest Elementary added students from neighboring school North City Elementary. Through this experience, students have had to make new friends, adjust to a new learning environment, and try to come together as one unified school. This change has affected all the students in my class, and gives them a unique understanding of perseverance.

III. Assessment:

I will be using a graphic organizer for my pre/post assessment instrument. The post-assessment will be completed on the same sheet as the pre-assessment. I chose this method of assessing students so that I can easily see what students have learned over the course of the unit. This format will give me instant data regarding what each child has learned. Additionally, I will add the rubric that I will use to grade students to the post-assessment, so they know exactly what is expected of them. The pre-assessment will show me what the students know prior to the unit, and that will help me to scaffold their conceptual understanding. The informal assessment instrument I will use will be a book poster with accompanying summary. Students will view their classmates' posters and summaries, making connections between multiple stories. The students will demonstrate these connections by adding ideas and thoughts to a concept map, through a whole class discussion. I will evaluate responses, checking for understanding; this information will determine future instructional strategies.

A. Learning Targets:

Learning Targets	GLE's Addressed	Evidence of Learning
Students will understand that: -Perseverance is never giving up during challenging times. (generalization) -People persevere when they	Reading 2.1.4 Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: use prior knowledge/schema.	Pre-Assessment: Students will work individually on a graphic organizer answering the questions: 1. What does perseverance mean to you? 2. Do you know anyone

<p>believe they can attain their goals. (generalization)</p> <p>-Courage, faith, and a positive attitude help us overcome obstacles and persevere. (generalization)</p> <p>-Our own perseverance can be strengthened with the support of family and friends. (generalization)</p>	<p>2.4.5 Understand how to generalize from text.</p>	<p>(including yourself) who has persevered, if so how?</p> <p>3. What skills, traits or support systems enabled them to persevere?</p> <p>Post –</p> <p>Assessment/Summative: As a summative assessment, I will have the students go back to the original graphic organizer and add to the three questions above. To question one, students will provide a definition of perseverance that reflects personal experiences and ideas gained through literature circle discussions. Students will have to show that they understand that perseverance is when someone keeps working for their goal even when a resolution is unknown or not easily attained. To the second question, students will need to give 3 examples of when they or someone they know has persevered. For the third question, for each of the three examples in question two, students will give two skills, traits, or support systems that enabled them to persevere</p>
<p>1. Students will be able to make connections to self, text, and the world, in order to understand persevering despite obstacles, with the focus being on their own lives.</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p>2.1.4. Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: use prior knowledge/schema.</p> <p>2.1.6. Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: monitor for meaning, create</p>	<p>Post –</p> <p>Assessment/Summative: As a summative assessment, I will have the students go back to the original graphic organizer and add to the three questions above. To question one, students will provide a definition of perseverance that reflects personal experiences</p>

	<p>mental images, and generate and answer questions in grade level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.</p> <p>2.4.5. Understand how to generalize from text.</p>	<p>and ideas gained through literacy circle discussion. Students will have to show that they understand that perseverance is when one keeps working for their goal even when a resolution is unknown or not easily attained. To the second question, students will need to give three examples of when they or someone they know has persevered. For the third question, for each of the three examples in question two, students will give two skills, traits, or support systems that enabled them to persevere.</p>
<p>2. Students will be able to summarize their books to show how the main character displayed perseverance when overcoming obstacles.</p>	<p>Reading 2.1.7 Apply comprehension strategies during and after reading: summarize grade level informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.</p> <p>2.4.1 Apply the skills of drawing conclusions, providing a response, and</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Students will make a poster of their book. The poster will have the title, author, and illustrator (if applicable). The poster will depict an event in the book that shows the character persevering. The poster will have a summary of the book that describes the</p>

	<p>expressing insights to informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.</p> <p>Writing</p> <p>1.1. Pre-writes to generate ideas and plan writing.</p> <p>1.3. Revises to improve text.</p> <p>1.5. Publishes text to share with audience.</p> <p>3.2. Uses appropriate style.</p>	<p>obstacle depicted in the picture. When posters and summaries are completed, the class will do a gallery walk. Students will look for common ideas throughout the posters and summaries. As a whole group we will add these to our concept map.</p>
<p>3. Students will need to be able to work within a literature group where they will critically discuss the theme of perseverance and listen to group member's ideas in order to strengthen their own idea of perseverance.</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p>2.1.6 Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: monitor for meaning, create mental images, and generate and answer questions in grade level informational/expository text and/or literary/narrative text.</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Students will complete a self-evaluation that addresses how well they were prepared for literature circles and discussions. The evaluation will address their participation and their listening skills.</p>

	<p>2.1.7 Apply comprehension strategies during and after reading: summarize grade level informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.</p> <p>2.4.1 Apply the skills of drawing conclusions, providing a response, and expressing insights to informational/expository text and literary/narrative text.</p> <p>Communications:</p> <p>1.1.2 Applies a variety of listening and observation skills/strategies to recall and interpret information.</p> <p>2.2.1 Understands how to show respect for others' input.</p> <p>2.2.2 Applies skills to contribute responsibly in a one-to-one conversation or group setting.</p> <p>2.3.1 Understands that individuals may have differing opinions, perspectives, and meanings for communication.</p>	
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B. Assessment Instruments:

Pre- and Post-assessment Rubric

Each student will be given a copy of this rubric along with their original graphic organizer for the post-assessment. Using the rubric as a guide, students will re-answer the questions. This will provide me with a quality assessment of what the students have learned throughout the unit.

Questions	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations
1. What does perseverance mean to you?	Students provide a definition that is not clear, and does not express to the reader knowledge or perseverance.	Students will provide a definition of perseverance that reflects personal experiences and ideas gained through literacy circle discussion.
2. Do you know anyone (including yourself) who has persevered, if so how?	Students only give one example of someone who has persevered or examples do not show clear understanding of perseverance.	Students will give 2-3 examples of when they or someone they know has persevered.
3. What skills, traits or help did this person receive that enabled them to persevere?	Students do not give 2 examples of skills, traits, or support systems that enabled them to persevere or examples are unclear.	Students will need, for each of the three examples in question two, to give 2 skills, traits, or examples of support systems that enabled them to persevere.

Self-Evaluation

This instrument will be used by students to assess their own achievement of being an effective group member during literature circles.

Cooperative group skills: Self-evaluation

Literature Circle Book Read _____

Names of group members _____

Answer each question with a number describing how well you worked with your group. Circle the 3 if you feel you did well at this, circle the 2 if you feel you did okay at this, and circle the 1 if you feel you did not do well at this.

1. I came prepared to discuss my book. I had read it and made some notes for the discussion.	3	2	1
2. I made a connection from the text to myself, another text, or something else in order to understand perseverance.	3	2	1
3. I stayed on task during our group discussion and did not disrupt others.	3	2	1
4. I was respectful and listened without interrupting other group members.	3	2	1
5. I shared my ideas with other group members at least three times.	3	2	1

6. Explain one thing you can work on next time.

C. Positive Impact on Student Learning:

I have chosen a simple assessment plan because my main goal for this unit is for students to understand what perseverance is, what it takes to persevere, and to realize that they have the ability to persevere in their own life. This is paired with the concern that during the period in which this unit will be taught I will not be teaching writing. Therefore, I have scaled down my assessment tools to get to the heart of what students have learned.

My pre- and post-assessment explicitly relate to my 1st and 2nd learning targets. For these assessments, I ask the students to tell me directly what they know about perseverance and make connections to their own lives. By having students answer these questions on the same page, I will be able to easily see what they have learned (and the students will too). Their informal assessment doubles as the student’s artistic response, with a small writing portion. I chose this to be my informal assessment since I would not be directly teaching writing to my students, and because it will help strengthen their insights for the post-assessment. Lastly, I used a quick self-assessment form for the students to check their own participation level during literature circles. I plan to use this assessment throughout the unit in order to give students time to reflect upon their experiences.

IV. Unit Outline:

A. Lesson Outlines:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	TLU introduction with pre-assessment. Start read aloud. LT: 1	Introduce students to literature circles – mock circles; make guidelines for groups. Read Aloud. LT: 1, 4	Introduce books for literature circles; students will look at books, decide what they want to read, and make choices. Read Aloud. LT: 1	Students are assigned books. First lesson on making connections. Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2	Students will start reading. All reading will be done in class. Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2
Week 2	First lesson on summarizing. Silent reading Read Aloud.	Literature circles (3 groups, 15 minutes per group)	Second lesson on making connections. Summary 3	Literature circles (3 groups, 15 minutes per group)	Silent reading Read Aloud. LT:1

	LT: 1, 3	Summary Lesson 2 Silent reading Read Aloud. LT: 1, 3, 4	Lesson Silent reading Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2, 3	Silent reading Read Aloud. LT: 1, 4	
Week 3	Final lesson on making connections. Silent reading Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2,	Literature circles (3 groups, 15 minutes per group) Start Posters Silent reading Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2, 3, 4,	Literature circles (3 groups, 15 minutes per group) Posters Books Finished Finish Read Aloud. LT: 1, 2, 3, 4	Finish Posters Museum Walk LT: 1, 2, 3	Post-Assessment, final self-assessment and closure activity. LT: 1, 2, 4

B. Introducing the Theme:

On the first day of the TLU, I am going to begin by reading two very simple picture books. One book will be *The Little Engine that Could*, and the other will be *The Carrot Seed*. The reason for choosing these books is two-fold. First, I want the idea of persevering to be evident and second the next day we will use these books to for literature circle practice. After a brief discussion about the books and the underlying theme, I will have the students work on the pre-assessment. When students are done, I will move the students into an overview of what we will be doing over the next few weeks. During this discussion, I will cover the learning targets and make a brief statement about literature

circles (literature circles will be covered in more depth the next day) and how they will be assessed.

C. Concept Development:

My concept development lesson will come the day of museum walk. Through guided whole class discussion, the class and I will synthesize their ideas from literature circles, read aloud, and the book posters summaries. When needed, I will use prompts to help students come to key generalizations. This class discussion will be held in a semi-circle without desks and all students facing each other. I will enlist two or three students to write the classes ideas on anchor paper, giving students more control over the discussion and thus the knowledge construction.

V. Artistic Response:

Students will create a book poster that will depict their character persevering while overcoming obstacles. On the poster the student will include the title of the book, the author, and illustrator, if applicable. Students will also include a brief summary, no more than eight sentences, describing the scene. The summary will addresses how the character persevered and what helped the character to persevere. Students will then participate in a museum walk, looking at the posters and reading the summaries written by their peers.

VI. Thematic Book and Resource List:

VII. Read Aloud Books

Krauss, R. (1945). *The Carrot Seed*. New York: Harper Festival.

Nobody believes the boy's carrot will grow, except the boy.

Piper, W. (2001). *The Little Engine that Could*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

On the other side of the mountain the boys and girls need their toys and the only train available is too little or is he?

Literature Circle Books

Bridges, R. (1999). *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic Press.

How would you like federal marshals to escort you to school, that is what Ruby Bridges had to do, this book tells her story in her words.

Grandiner, J. R. (1980). *Stone Fox*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Little Willy must give his grandfather a reason to live again, will winning the dogsled race do it?

Green, C. (1992). *George Washington Carver: Scientist and Teacher*. Chicago: Childrens Press.

This book chronicles the changes that George Washington Carver endure on his way to become a leader in agriculture.

Hamm, D. J. (1997). *Daughter of Suqua*. Morton Grove: Albert Whitman and Company.

Ida's family is her world but the U.S. government wants Ida to live in their world.

Lasky, K. (2000). *The Journal of Augustus Pelletier: The Lewis and Clark Expedition*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Augustus is ready for adventure and is sure he will find it with the Lewis and Clark expedition or does it find him?

Miller, W. (1994). *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*. New York: Lee & Low Books.

Zora is told she should act like a girl, but her mother believes that Zora can do anything she puts her mind to. Zora uses this support when life becomes difficult.

Moss, M. (2004). *Mighty Jackie: The Strike Out Queen*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Jackie dreams of pitching in the World Series, but a girl in baseball, she will have to prove herself.

Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. New York: Philomel Books.

This autobiographical look at the author's life shows how the help of a concerned adult can change one's life.

Say, A. (1990). *El Chino*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

A Chinese basketball player, whoever heard of such a thing, what about a Chinese matador?

Focus Lesson Books

Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Grace loves to act and when she is told that Peter Pan is neither a girl nor black she doubts whether she try out. She is inspired by her grandmother and her surprise.

Garland, S. (1993). *The Lotus Seed*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

This book follows a girl from Vietnam through the challenging times of her life. She finds strength and comfort from her special lotus seed.

References:

Amazon.com. (1995). <http://www.amazon.com>.

I used the Amazon website in order to locate books related to my theme.

Hill, B. C., Schlick Noe, K. L., Johnson, H.J. (2001). Literature Circles Resource Guide.

Norwood: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

I used this book to help me find books for my Themed Literature Unit.

King County Library System. (2005). <http://www.kcls.org/shoreline/community.cfm>.

I used this website to locate books relevant to my theme at libraries in my neighborhood.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.) <http://www.k12.wa.us/>.

I used this website to locate the EARLs and GLEs in Reading, Writing, and Communications.

Schlick Noe, K.L. Literature Circles Resource Center. <http://www.litcircles.org/>.

I used this as a resource for setting up literature circles and extension project ideas.

Schlick Noe, K.L. Themed Literature Units. <http://fac-staff.seattleu.edu/kschlnoe/TLU/TLU.html>.

I referenced this website when creating my Themed Literature Unit and when forming the theme and generalizations. I also used this site to reference book lists.

VII. Communications with Families/Students:

Dear Families,

Hello again! I just wanted to touch base with everyone. We have just finished our social studies unit on early northwest explorers and fur traders; your students did a great job! During my last three weeks, I will be teaching math, and am excited about working on those skills with your students. We also will be starting a themed literature unit on "Persevering Despite Obstacles." I am very excited to begin this unit.

During this unit students will be looking for the answers to: "What is perseverance?" and "What traits, skills, or support systems do people have in order to persevere?" I will be asking the students to use literature as well as their own lives to answer these questions. Students will be put into literature circle groups (similar to a book club), where they will discuss their books and the prevalent themes. Through whole class discussions as well as literature circles students will explore persevering despite obstacles in their own lives and of those people close to them. Please speak to your

student about your life and challenges that required perseverance. Below I listed three websites that talk about perseverance.

This theme can bring up sensitive issues for some students and families due to past obstacles. I respect your privacy and if you have any concerns, questions, or great perseverance stories, please contact me. I am available before and after school, my phone number is 206-555-5555, and my e-mail is grandbois@email.com.

Thank You,
Mr. Derek GrandBois

<http://www.quote garden.com/perseverance.html>

Famous quotes about perseverance.

<http://www.k12.hi.us/~mkunimit/perseverance.htm>

Great link that gives students relevant ideas of what perseverance is and what it looks like. Added bonus is book list at the bottom of page. This is a great chance to do read aloud at home.

<http://storyproject.seattlechildrens.org/featuredstories.aspx>

Part of Seattle Children's Hospital, this site gives real stories of perseverance of kids fighting for their lives. Good way to get perspective.

VIII. Community Resource/Collaboration:

Public libraries in the area provide the best support for this unit. Most of my books will come from both the Seattle Public Library and King County Library systems.

IX. Classroom Community:

This unit provides multiple opportunities for my students to participate in a democratic classroom that is respectful, with opportunities for self-directed learning and seeing multiple perspectives. I plan on accomplishing this by giving my students the opportunity to choose first, second, and third choices for their literature circle book. I will have six groups, four reading chapter books, with two groups reading the same book. The other two groups will read a set of three picture books. The books represent various reading levels but all have powerful themes. I believe with the amount of choices available, students will be able to get a book they want, and that is at their level. When forming groups I will make sure to place students in groups that respect where they are academically and balance the ability levels of students.

I foresee literature circles to be a space where students can explore their thinking in a safe environment. I will first have to help the students to make guidelines in order for this vision to become reality. Once my students feel safe within their literature circles it will be a prime time for them to see perseverance through their classmates eyes, this will also happen during the museum walk. I believe this and self-directed learning will work very well together. Lastly, I have chosen books that provide various perspectives including: woman's rights, students with learning disabilities, Asian, African, and Native-American points of view. I believe this will support all my students where they are and challenge them intellectually.

X. Unit Overview/Critique:

This unit covers persevering despite obstacles, in three weeks. I am doing this by focusing on reading and reading skills. As I stated, I will not be teaching writing during this time, and my social studies unit will be finished. For this reason, I chose to focus on the stories held within the books my students are writing. Students will receive six short lessons, three on making connections, and three on writing summaries. Throughout the year, this class has been working on summaries. This allows me to review summary writing, and to focus the lessons on the type of summary I want--those for the book posters. Brevity, coupled with deemphasizing writing, will make this unit a positive experience for all my students. Here lies the weakness of this unit; I cannot fully integrate it with other learning taking place in the class. Regardless, I feel strongly that my students and I will find this unit enjoyable and fulfilling.