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Analyzing the Effectiveness of Graphic Organizers in an English Classroom

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University Honors Capstone

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TED 4660: Senior Honors Project/Thesis

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Background.....	4
Introduction	
Goals and Objectives.....	8
Participants	
Methods and Materials.....	10
Results	
Data Analysis.....	13
Discussion and Conclusions.....	14
References.....	17
Appendix.....	19
• Appendix A: Instructional and Assessment Strategies	
• Appendix B: Unit Calendar	
• Appendix C: Day 2 Graphic Organizer	
• Appendix D: Day 3 Graphic Organizer	
• Appendix E: Day 4 Graphic Organizer	
• Appendix F: Bloom’s Taxonomy	
• Appendix G: Nebraska ELA Standards	
• Appendix H: Day 2 Graphic Organizer Student Sample	
• Appendix I: Day 3 Graphic Organizer Student Sample	
• Appendix J: Day 4 Graphic Organizer Student Sample	
• Appendix K: Pre/Post Test	

Abstract

The use of graphic organizers has risen in classrooms over the past few decades. However, it is essential to assess whether they lead to improved student learning, as some trending instructional strategies are not well-backed by quality research. The purpose of this study was to analyze if graphic organizers are indeed effective to use in a high school English class. This study took place in a secondary school setting for a weeklong unit. For this project, students completed three graphic organizers throughout the unit in order to better understand selected topics relating to the unit's non-fiction text including inferences, characterization, vocabulary, and descriptive writing. Students completed a pre and post test at the start and the end of the unit. The pre and post tests were implemented to assess if the integration of multiple graphic organizers would improve student learning. After reviewing and analyzing this data, I found that graphic organizers were an effective instructional strategy to improve students' learning of the content presented.

Keywords: graphic organizers, instructional strategies, English classrooms, secondary education

Background

In collaboration with my mentor teacher, it was determined that for the capstone project I would plan, implement, and assess a unit over a non-fiction text. The project was conducted in an eighth-grade classroom within a clinical practice placement at a suburban middle school in Nebraska's Millard Public Schools School district. The student to teacher ratio is an average of 14:1. The student population is 61% White, 21% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 9% other. 49% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if integrating graphic organizers would improve student learning for selected topics. I utilized the following guiding question for the unit: "How will the use of graphic organizers in an English classroom affect student learning?" For this unit plan, I focused on integrating graphic organizers as the main instructional strategy, and integrating multiple-choice tests as the main assessment strategy.

Before I began lesson planning, I created a calendar to outline each day's lesson (see Appendix B). The objective of integrating the graphic organizers was to determine if the instructional strategy would increase student's knowledge of inferences, characterization, vocabulary, and descriptive writing. As the unit progressed, I set higher expectations for my students by increasing the difficulty of the content that was included in the day's graphic organizer. The students applied, analyzed, evaluated, and demonstrated higher levels of understanding through the graphic organizers as they worked with the unit's text.

I collected data throughout the one-week unit to determine the effectiveness that the graphic organizers had on student performance between the pre and post tests. I created all the graphic organizers (see Appendix C). The effectiveness of the graphic organizers was analyzed by

comparing the results of the pretest administered on the first day of the unit, to the posttest results (the summative assessment) that was administered on the last day of the unit. The tests were identical and a multiple-choice format.

Main Instructional Strategy

Graphic Organizers vs. Traditional-Style Notes

Multiple studies have found that graphic organizers significantly increase student learning in comparison to traditional-style notes (Choudhary & Bano, 2022; Ranulfo, 2019; Fischer & Frey, 2018; Asan, 2007; Meera & Aiswarya, 2015). The unique types of spatial representation found in all types of graphic organizers engage students more deeply than traditional-style notes and fulfill their need for a non-traditional way in which they can organize, explore, and practice content. Furthermore, traditional-style note taking often limits students to rote memorization (Meera & Aiswarya) while graphic organizers require students to study the content in more creative methods. Additionally, students' conceptual understanding improves more with the use of graphic organizers than traditional-style notes (Ranulfo).

Graphic Organizers Increase Student Engagement

Studies have evidenced that integrating graphic organizers increases student engagement because students have not been overexposed to them. Choudhary & Bano (2022) found that the use of graphic organizers consistently increases student engagement in the learning process. Asan (2007) noted that this finding is not surprising, as after numerous years in the classroom students often tire of the traditional note-taking style or the traditional oral presentation of information. Choudhary & Bano noted in their research that when teachers give timely feedback on the graphic organizers the feedback increases student engagement as students are able to reflect on their work more deeply. Choudhary & Bano concluded that the use of graphic organizers in a collaborative setting was an excellent way to improve peer idea exchange. Graphic Organizers Deepen Student Learning

Several studies (Meera & Aiswarya, 2015; Ranulfo, 2019; Fischer & Frey, 2018) have found that graphic organizers are the superior format for notetaking in educational settings due to how they engage students in deeper learning than traditional-style notes. Meera & Aiswarya concluded that the integration of non-linguistic representations (e.g., diagrams, pictures, symbols) in graphic organizers increase student learning. They noted that graphic organizers are an essential component of high-quality teaching and learning. They shared that providing an expression of an idea in a way that does not include words is an essential component with many students' learning. Many students are visual learners and often learn and retain information better when they can utilize non-linguistic representation, which is often lacking from traditional-style notes.

It has been found that the use of graphic organizers helps students move past the stage of simply recalling concepts into the stage of developing their ability to create new ideas based on unrelated concepts (Ranulfo, 2019; Fischer & Frey, 2018). The researchers found that moving to the latter stage is essential for critical thinking and setting students up for success to build upon their knowledge as their learning progresses. Asan (2007) noted that integrating graphic organizers into lessons helps students develop interrelationships, create meaning schemes, and construct knowledge bases, all of which deepen learning.

Main Assessment Strategy

Benefits of Multiple-Choice Tests

Multiple-choice tests (MCTs) have been found to aid students' learning, particularly when coupled with other assessment strategies (Whittaker & Olcay, 2022). Contrary to somewhat popular belief, it is incorrect to say that MCTs are limited to only assessing student knowledge at the factual recall level (Whittaker & Olcay). It is not difficult for MCTs to include questions past the "remember" and "understand" level of Bloom's Taxonomy (see Appendix F) that instead task students to work at the "evaluate" level. According to B. W et al. (2019) it is necessary for students to

engage in frequent retrieval of information, no matter how well it has been learned, in order to have successful long-term retention. They found that MCTs are a cost-effective way for students to engage with content, due to limited time in both the classroom in general and out-of-class study time normally devoted by students.

A study by Clarke et al. (2004) found that MCTs are an excellent tool for strengthening and enhancing student learning. They conclude that the use of MCTs is an effective way to improve students' memory of content directly related to lecture topics, as compared to students who do not use MCTs during a unit. Another benefit of MCTs is the process of students successfully retrieving stored knowledge to correctly answer a question has been proven to have a positive effect on their learning (Butler, 2018). This finding supports the idea that the difficulty of MCTs should be considered "challenging" without being considered "overly challenging." Clarke et al. (2004) also conclude that MCTs that include images are especially beneficial for student learning. They found that if an image is used in a formative MCT, and later reused in the unit, it aids students in recalling content.

Best Types of MCTs

Whittaker & Olcay (2022) found that the best types of MCTs find the appropriate middle ground between creating "higher-complexity" questions and meeting students where they are at on an individual level. Various other studies (Butler, 2018; Yang et al., 2019) have argued that this balance is necessary in order to create an effective MCT. Butler (2018) stated that there should not be complex item types or answering procedures in MCTs as those formats are more likely to cause students to utilize strategic guessing. Butler also found that it is best when MCTs do not include "none-of-the-above" and "all-of-the-above" as response options, as both of those options reduce local independence among items, contributing to the previously described problem (p. 326). It is noteworthy that the exact number of plausible response options is not necessarily three; that number is only determined by the number of plausible *incorrect* responses that can be created (Haladyna et al., 2002

as cited in Butler). For example, if three plausible incorrect responses can be provided, then using four total alternatives creates no problem for the test's effectiveness.

Butler (2018) also noted that the process of educators giving feedback to students after MCTs significantly increases student learning. Similarly, when this occurs it minimizes the small number of downsides that sometimes accompany the MCT form of testing. Slepko et al. (2021) argued that a large range of item difficulty offers almost equal opportunity for item discrimination (notably items with values of p that are within ≈ 0.10 of either 1 or of the expectation value for guessing). Regarding Cronbach's alpha (1951), a measure of internal consistency, Slepko et al. proved that varying amounts of score uncertainty can be tolerated depending on the goal of the test. Therefore, if MCTs reach a reliability of at least 0.7 then the test is an effective measure of student learning. Slepko et al. also discovered that even when item difficulty is mostly above 0.6 both the overall performance of students and test averages are not negatively affected. Therefore, if p is generally between 0.4-0.9 the test should be an effective measure of student knowledge.

Goals and Objectives

Goals of the Unit

The first goal set for the unit was that 75% or more of students would increase their scores by 50% or more from the pretest to the posttest. This goal assisted me with determining if integrating graphic organizers would increase student learning. The second goal was to increase students' confidence in writing through their bellwork, quick writes, graphic organizer work, and seed writing (see Appendix A). The third goal was that students would improve their understanding of as many topics as possible from the pretest.

Objectives of the Unit

Lesson 1 Objectives:

1. The students will complete a 12-item pretest.
2. The students will complete a seed writing prompt.

Lesson 2 Objectives:

1. The students will listen to a reading of the text.
2. The students will complete a quick write.
3. The students will complete a 4 square graphic organizer regarding vocabulary.

Lesson 3 Objectives:

1. The students will receive direct instruction about characterization & inferences and score a minimum of 50% on an exit ticket.
2. The students will complete a customized graphic organizer that includes 4 items on characterization and 5 items on inferences.

Lesson 4 Objectives:

1. The students will receive direct instruction about descriptive writing and score at least 50% on an exit ticket.
2. The students will complete a customized graphic organizer with 4 items regarding descriptive writing.
3. The students will write 2 paragraphs (5-7 sentences) based on their graphic organizer.

Lesson 5 Objectives:

1. The students will complete a 12-item posttest.
2. The students will revise their seed writing.

Participants

This study was conducted with 47 students in 3 regular sections of an 8th grade English Language Arts (ELA) class. I taught full-day lessons to all three sections. The duration of the lessons across all sections was approximately fifty minutes. My mentor teacher and I made the decision to exclude twelve students from the study as they missed more than one day of instruction. Across the three sections 3 students were English Language Learners, 5 were categorized as gifted, and 16 received special education services. The Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for the 16 special education students noted that the students had deficits in reading and writing. The students on IEPs received specialized assistance on assignments during the unit and they were provided with the opportunity to take the pre and post tests on paper rather than on their laptops. Additionally, the students on IEPs were provided with the opportunity to have the test questions read aloud to them.

Methods and Materials

The five-day unit of instruction was entitled ‘What Matters’ and was based on an excerpt from the nonfictional narrative entitled *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*. The unit aligned with Nebraska standards: LA.8.RI.7, LA.8.RI.8, LA.8.RI.3, LA.8.V.1, and LA.8.W.1 (see Appendix G). The guiding question "When is it right to take a stand?" was posed throughout the unit to guide students’ critical thinking. Throughout the unit both direct and indirect instruction strategies, as well as various assessment strategies, were used. Direct instructional strategies included: gradual release of instruction, multi-level questioning, content to real-world connections, and reinforcing effort and positive behavior. Indirect instructional strategies included: bellwork, brainstorming, and think-pair-share (see Appendix A). The following assessment strategies were integrated throughout the unit: exit tickets, learning checkpoints, observation, seed writing, multiple-choice tests (MCTs), and a quick write (see Appendix A).

The instructional strategy that I focused on during the 5-day period was graphic organizers and

how they potentially increase students' understanding of the text and the selected associated topic(s) for each day. Lessons were co-taught using the one teach, one assist method. This method has one educator facilitating instruction and one monitoring the classroom for behavior management and providing individual assistance. Direct instruction and gradual release of responsibility were used to ensure that students felt supported throughout the unit. Students were encouraged to ask for help throughout all of the lessons. Many students received extra scaffolding through assistance both individually and within their small groups.

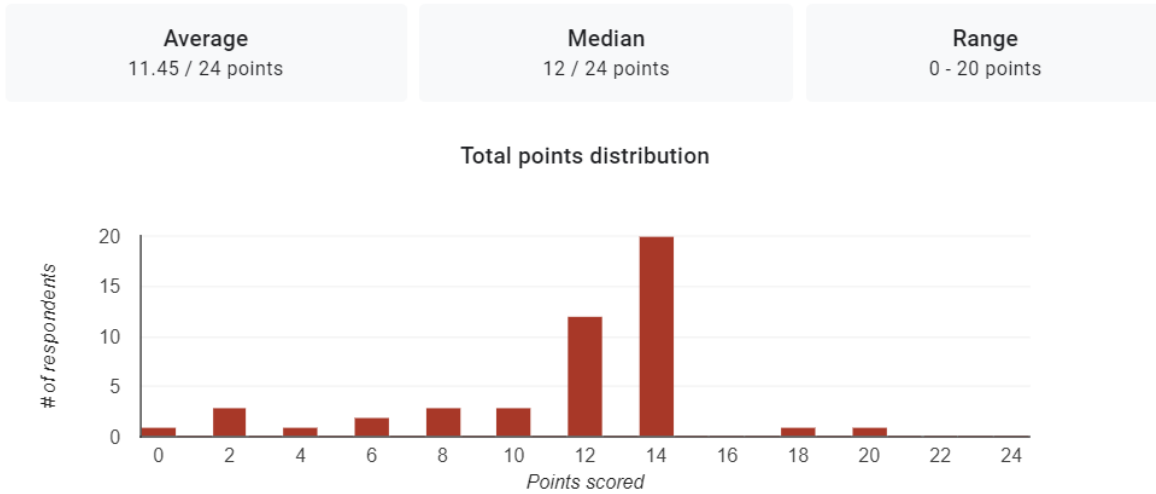
The district curriculum used for the unit was entitled *My Perspectives*. I created three graphic organizers to effectively match the unit goals and objectives. I used some of the supplemental content from *My Perspectives* in my creation of the graphic organizers. Students utilized individual workbooks to take notes when we read the text. Students underlined key passages when completing their graphic organizers, and they completed the comprehension checks directly in the workbook.

Students completed their bellwork and quick writes in their physical notebooks. All students had a laptop to complete electronic assignments and access Google Classroom with. Students completed their seed writing online through a Google Doc. Students completed the graphic organizers on paper copies. Students completed exit tickets, the pretest, and the posttest on Google Forms that were all accessed through Google Classroom. See Appendix A for a description of all the previously described instructional strategies.

Results

Figure 1

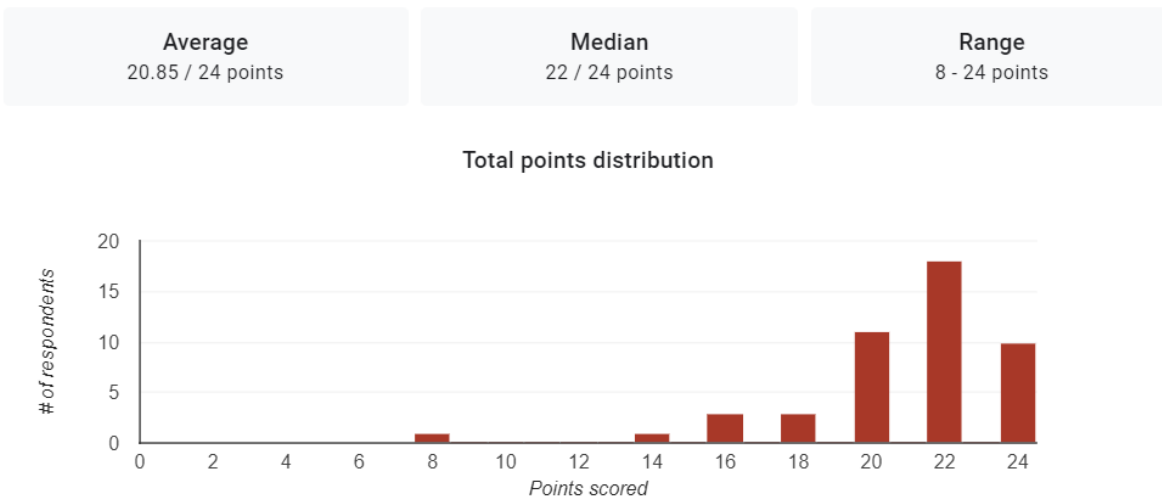
Pretest scores



Note. This graph shows the total points distribution of the number of points scored by each student.

Figure 2

Posttest scores

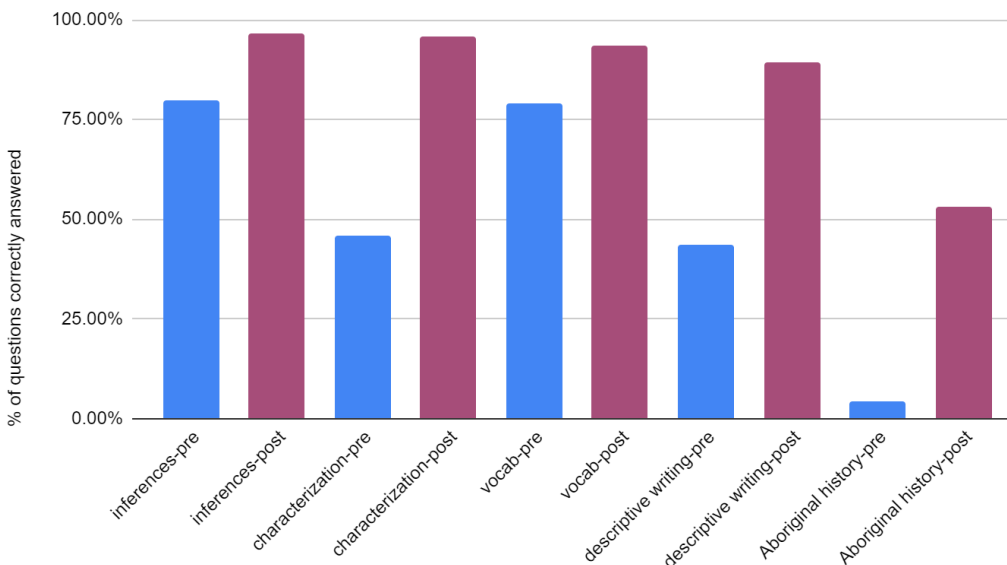


Note. This graph shows the total points distribution of the number of points scored by each student.

Figure 3

Comparison of Scores (Topic-Specific) on Pre and Post Tests

Comparison of Scores (Topic-Specific) on Pre and Post Tests



Note. This graph shows the average percent of questions answered correctly, separated by topic, by each student.

Data Analysis

Pretest

An analysis of the pretest scores, which included the topics of inferences, characterization, vocabulary, descriptive writing, and Aboriginal history, indicated that most students did not have a substantial understanding of those topics. The average score was 11.5/24 (48%) (see Figure 1). This score indicated that students answered about 5.5 out of 12 questions incorrectly. The three topics in which students consistently missed questions were characterization, descriptive writing, and Aboriginal history (see Figure 3).

Posttest

Following analysis of the results from the pre and post tests, all students made growth. The average score on the posttest was 21/24 (88%) (see Figure 2). The only topic in which students

frequently missed questions on the posttest was Aboriginal history: 15 of 47 students missed 1/2 questions from that topic. The post test scores also indicated that students made the most growth in the topics that were originally the most missed: characterization, descriptive writing, and Aboriginal history (see Figure 3).

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to analyze if the integration of graphic organizers into English lessons would increase student learning. The results from the comparison of the pre and post tests evidenced that student understanding of all topics (inferences, characterization, vocabulary, descriptive writing, and Aboriginal history) increased. I believe that due to integrating a variety of differentiated instructional and assessment strategies the students' posttest scores evidenced increased understanding. The only area that there was not a large increase in understanding was the topic of Aboriginal history. However, after performing further analysis over the questions on the pre and post tests, I attribute that lack of greater growth in that topic to the difficulty of one of the two questions from that section. This question from the Aboriginal section required students to recall a number relating to Aboriginal history, instead of qualitative information, which was the type of information that the unit focused on.

I found that students did the best work on the graphic organizers which tasked them to approach the content in the same way that they had worked with it during the direct instruction portion of the lesson. When the graphic organizers significantly differed in what they asked students to do, in comparison to the work during direct instruction, students ended up needing more clarification for the first part of their work time. I also found that, overall, the students were very engaged and motivated to complete their graphic organizers. This can be attributed to the fact that students completed them in a small group context; multiple students in every class gave positive feedback regarding being able to work with others. I believe that the opportunity that students had to collaborate with peers helped in

two main ways based on the group structures. As each group was a mix of students with significantly varying abilities it was clear that the students that normally struggle felt less overwhelmed and the stronger students were able to exchange even more higher-level ideas. This study showed me that custom making a graphic organizer is often the best-way to meet student needs and present the content in a way that best aligns with the other instructional and assessment strategies that one is using in a unit (all graphic organizers in the unit were created by me). Lastly, most students met all of the objectives during the unit.

Graphic organizers have been present in the world of education for a long time. However, their popularity has increased over the past few decades. Unsurprisingly, more advanced formats of graphic organizers that move beyond the simple Venn diagram and T-chart have also become the norm in many classrooms. The purpose of this study was fulfilled as I was able to conclude that graphic organizers are effective to use in an English class. This finding may be explained by the fact that my students were exposed to a wide variety of graphic organizers (three types in a five-day unit) including the fact that a wide variety of other instructional strategies, in addition to various assessment strategies, were also utilized throughout the unit to support student learning.

Two of my three goals for this capstone were met in this study. My first goal (that 75% or more of students increase their scores by 50% or more from the pretest to the posttest) was not met. However, it was very close to being met; 90% of students increased their scores by at least 40%, with many increasing their scores by 50% or more. Therefore, even though my exact goal was not met, I was still able to conclude that the use of graphic organizers during this unit was effective, as I consider 40% to be a significant score increase. My second goal (that students would increase their confidence in writing through their bellwork, quick write, graphic organizer work, and seed writing) was met. I found that students felt more confident about their writing throughout the unit for two main reasons. First, the number of students in each class willing to share what they had written to the whole class

increased throughout the unit. Second, students voiced more confident opinions of their writing as the unit progressed as well. My third goal (that students would improve their understanding of as many topics as possible from the pretest) was met, as every student increased their score by at least some points, with 90% of students increasing their scores by at least 40%, as previously mentioned.

There are at least two potential limitations concerning the results of this study. A first limitation concerns the fact that students came into their unit with different backgrounds in ELA from their previous years of schooling. Therefore, the differences among pretest scores can be at least partially attributed to that. However, it is impossible for a class to have students that share identical educational backgrounds so this limitation is not relevant to focus on, and likely did not have very significant effects on the study's results. A second potential limitation is that if any students utilized guessing to answer any of the questions on the pre and/or post test that would hinder the accuracy of comparing their scores. But, like the previous potential limitation, this limitation is impossible to control, and likely did not have very significant effects on the study's results. Despite these limitations, the present study has enhanced my understanding of the use of graphic organizers in an 8th grade English class. I hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of this important instructional strategy.

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Appendix A

Instructional Strategies

- a. Gradual release of instruction: Lessons included all four components (“I do,” “We do,” “You do together,” and “You do alone”) of this strategy in order to support the release of the responsibility of learning.
- b. Think-Pair-Share: Opportunity for students to individually reflect before engaging in peer collaboration to share ideas & allows me to assess their understanding through observation of these conversations.
- c. Multi-Level Questioning: Asking probing open and close ended questions to encourage students to deeply reflect upon the current topics as well as further clarify their thinking (e.g., “What made you think that?” “Tell me more...”), concisely restating their responses for their peers and for clarification.
- d. Brainstorming: Facilitate individual critical thinking; students did individual brainstorming before discussing answers to questions with peers to ensure that every student was given a chance to recall information on their own and be able to assess their own understanding of the current question.
- e. Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition: Provided specific praise and “United Spotlight” incentives for students when they participated, showed effort, and provided correct responses to support engagement.
- f. Graphic Organizers: Different types of templates that guide students through higher level prompts to fill in information relating to the lesson’s topic(s).

- g. Content to Real-World Connections: During direct instruction real-world connections were provided to make the content more engaging and more easily understandable for students.
- h. Bellwork: A question or group of questions for students to answer through writing to get them focused on the content area to make them better prepared for the lesson to follow.

Assessment Strategies

- a. Exit Tickets: Students turn in at the end of the lesson as a formative check for understanding to help me determine if additional review is needed during the next lesson.
- b. Learning Checkpoints: A formative check for understanding where students display a thumbs down, middle, or up as a way to self-assess & simultaneously show me their understanding of the content.
- c. Observation: Observing student conversations and work during work time to assess whether or not they are on track and understanding the content.
- d. Quick Writes: Students write in response to a prompt relating to the day's current topic(s). I read these as I walk around the room to assess whether or not they are on track and understanding the content.
- e. Seed Writing: Students write in response to a prompt that relates to the unit's overarching question at the start of the unit. At the end of the unit, they edit and revise their work based on feedback given by the teacher.
- f. Multiple Choice Tests (MCTs): A test format that provides an efficient way to assess students' knowledge; especially useful if used at the start and end of the unit (pre and post tests) to be able to compare growth in students' scores.

Appendix B

ELA 8	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Learning Target:	TLWD comprehension of literary skills with a pretest.	TLWD comprehension of the text.	TLWD analysis of inferences and characterization in the text.	TLWD evaluation of text through descriptive writing.	TLWD synthesis of concepts learned this week in a posttest.
Activities	"Rabbit Proof Fence" pretest	bell work	bell work	bell work	bell work
	seed writing	background, then read story	lesson on inferences and character analysis	lesson on descriptive writing	"Rabbit Proof Fence" test
		comprehension questions	inferences & characterization graphic organizer	descriptive writing graphic organizer & paragraphs	Seed Writing: edit & revise
		quick write	exit ticket	exit ticket	
		vocab graphic organizer			

Appendix C

Day 2 Graphic Organizer (4 Square Vocab)

Name: _____ Period ____

Word urgently	Meaning
Word in a sentence	Drawing to represent word

Word nervously	Meaning
-------------------	---------

Word in a sentence	Drawing to represent word
--------------------	---------------------------

Word confidently	Meaning
---------------------	---------

Word in a sentence	Drawing to represent word
--------------------	---------------------------

<p>Word</p> <p>cautiously</p>	<p>Meaning</p>
<p>Word in a sentence</p>	<p>Drawing to represent word</p>

Appendix D

Day 3 Graphic Organizer: Character Analysis & Inferences

Name _____ Period__

Write 1-2 sentences for each box that you fill in for the graphic organizer.

Character Analysis

Character(s)	Evidence	What does this evidence reveal about this/these character(s)?
Molly	2nd to last sentence in paragraph 17	
Molly	1st sentence in paragraph 28	
Gracie & Daisy	2nd-3rd sentences in paragraph 36	

Gracie & Daisy	1st two sentences in paragraph 41	
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Inferences

Question	Inference (your answer)	Textual Evidence
What is the main reason that the three sisters are running away from the settlement camp?		paragraph 12
How do Gracie and Daisy feel when Molly tells them they are going home?		paragraph 13
Why does Molly not tell Martha Jones that she and her sisters are going to run away?		paragraph 2

<p>Why is Molly confident that she and her sisters will be able to find their way home to Jigalong?</p>		<p>paragraph 17</p>
<p>Are the girls putting forth their best effort to get home safely?</p>		<p>paragraph 40</p>

Appendix E

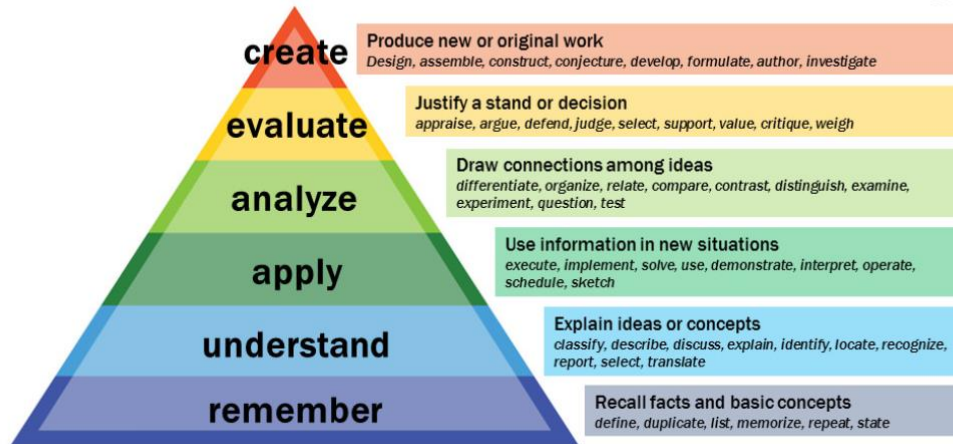
Day 4 Graphic Organizer-Descriptive Writing

Name _____ Period__

Topic	1 example of textual evidence	What does this textual evidence suggest?
actions of the girls before they leave		
setting at the Mission		
setting during the journey		

Appendix F

Bloom's Taxonomy



Appendix G

Nebraska State Standards

LA.8.RI.7 Analyze regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts.

LA.8.RI.8 Read and comprehend a wide range of informational texts of appropriate complexity at the high end of the 6-8 grade band independently and proficiently.

LA.8.RI.3 Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts perspective or purpose in a text and how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

LA.8.V.1 Integrate grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately for a variety of tasks and purposes.



LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.


Appendix H

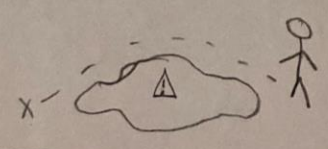
Student Work Sample: Day 2 Graphic Organizer

Day 2 Graphic Organizer (4 Square Vocab)

Name: _____ Period: _____

<p>Word</p> <p>urgently</p>	<p>Meaning</p> <p>in a way that requires immediate action or attention</p>
<p>Word in a sentence</p> <p>The family urgently ran to their gate in the airport hoping not to be late.</p>	<p>Drawing to represent word</p> 
<p>Word</p> <p>nervously</p>	<p>Meaning</p> <p>in an anxious manner</p>
<p>Word in a sentence</p> <p>I nervously walked up to present</p>	<p>Drawing to represent word</p> 

<p>Word</p> <p>confidently</p>	<p>Meaning</p> <p>Bold and proud</p>
<p>Word in a sentence</p> <p>A student confidently raised their hand with the answer.</p>	<p>Drawing to represent word</p> 

<p>Word</p> <p>cautiously</p>	<p>Meaning</p> <p>to be careful</p>
<p>Word in a sentence</p> <p>I cautiously walk around the puddle of water.</p>	<p>Drawing to represent word</p> 

Appendix I

Student Work Sample: Day 3 Graphic Organizer

Day 3 Graphic Organizer: Character Analysis & Inferences (ELA)

Name: [REDACTED] Period: [REDACTED]

Write 1-2 sentences for each box that you fill in for the graphic organizer.

Character Analysis

Character(s)	Evidence	What does this evidence reveal about this/these character(s)?
Molly	2nd to last sentence in paragraph 17	The sister must have good ideas or be a good leader
Molly	1st sentence in paragraph 28	She is thoughtful and she helps her sisters.
Gracie & Daisy	2nd-3rd sentences in paragraph 36	They are getting tired. The same she was good purpose.
Gracie & Daisy	1st two sentences in paragraph 41	They have faith and trust in Molly.

Inferences

Question	Inference (your answer)	Textual Evidence
What is the main reason that the three sisters are running away from the settlement camp?	She wanted to get back at her parents	paragraph 12
How do Gracie and Daisy feel when Molly tells them they are going home?	They are worried but think its a good idea	paragraph 13
Why does Molly not tell Martha Jones that she and her sisters are going to run away?	Because they want to keep running away a secret	paragraph 2
Why is Molly confident that she and her sisters will be able to find their way home to Jigalong?	Because she thought if she could find the force it would be easy	paragraph 17
Are the girls putting forth their best effort to get home safely?	Yes. They are overcoming lots of difficulties	paragraph 40

Appendix J

Student Work Sample: Day 4 Graphic Organizer

Day 4 Graphic Organizer-Descriptive Writing

Name: [Redacted] Period: 2

Topic	1 example of textual evidence	What does this textual evidence suggest?
actions of the girls before they leave	<p>^{other} "The girls were now getting ready for school, and the three watched quietly amidst all the activity."</p>	<p>The other girls were getting ready for school while the other 3 were watching</p>
setting at the Mission	<p>"Bossing and bullying were everywhere around them and there were cries and squeals of 'Don't, you're hurting my head.'"</p>	<p>This shows that the setting at the Mission was chaotic and crazy.</p>
setting during the journey	<p>"On they went, clashing down the sandy slope of the cliffs, dodging the small shrubs on the way and following the narrow path to the flooded river."</p>	<p>This shows that the journey was long and rough. It was also challenging.</p>

actions of the girls during the journey	"Molly strode on as best as best as she could along the muddy banks, pausing to only urge her young sisters to hurry up"	This evidence shows that they worked hard to try and get through the difficult stuff they got on their way.
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In 2 paragraphs, choose 1 of the topics above to elaborate on. You may reuse the example of textual evidence that you've already found, but add at least 3 other examples to have 4 total (use 2 examples per paragraph).

In paragraph 26, the first sentence, it clearly states in a descriptive way what actions occur to the girls during the journey saying, "Molly strode on as best as she could along the muddy banks, pausing to only urge her young sisters to hurry up and try to keep up with her." This evidence is showing that they worked hard to overcome the obstacles and the younger sisters were slowing down. Next, in paragraph 30, it's also showing the girls's actions, "They continued along the bank making slow progress through the obstacles that nature had left in their path." This evidence is showing that the girls were getting and were moving slow but they still pushed through the obstacles.

Another piece of evidence, found in paragraph 38, that states descriptively what they're doing

says, "Daisy and Gracie ran as fast as they could along the muddy path until they reached her." This evidence says that the younger sisters pushed themselves and ran as fast as they could to find their older sister. The last piece of evidence that shows their actions on the journey is in paragraph 27, "On they went, dashing down the sandy slope of the cliffs, dodging the small shrubs on the way and following the narrow path to the flooded river." This evidence shows that the girls were dodging hard obstacles and trying to find their way.

Appendix K

Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence:

Pre/PostTest

Identify the ONE choice that best answers the questions below.

1. What is an inference?

- a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning (clear thinking)
- a random guess
- something that is always directed stated and/or written in speaking or writing
- a wish or desire

2. Read this example before answering the question:

It is Friday and Martha gets home from school, clearly upset. Her mom asks her how her day was and Martha fakes a smile and says that it was fine. Her mom is trying to think of a way to cheer her up and remembers that tonight is the birthday party of one of Martha's friends, Lexi, who attends the same school. Martha's mom asks her if Martha is excited for the party and Martha doesn't answer, even though she and her mom normally have good communication.

What can we infer about Martha from her behavior?

- Martha is secretly excited to go to the birthday party.
- Martha had some sort of problem with Lexi during the school day and no longer wants to attend the party.
- Martha had a great day at school.
- Martha's mom was mean to her earlier that day so Martha is mad at her mom.

3. Authors use _____ to reveal the traits of characters.

characterization

only direct quotations

only indirect quotations

character mapping

4. Read the following before answering the question: Craig is a wrestler training over the summer for the next season. The coach demands that all players come in at 6:00 a.m. and lift weights until 8:00 a.m. Craig gets there at 5:00 a.m. to get an extra hour of training in every day. The coach compliments Craig and tells him, "You're a very hard worker. I'm very confident that you'll make the varsity team this season."

What evidence-supported character trait does Craig demonstrate?

hard-working

loyal

lazy

timid

5. Capturing an event through descriptive writing involves paying close attention to the details connected with:

all of your five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell)

only sight

only hearing

sight & hearing

6. Read the following before answering the question:

"Inside, the school smelled smartly of varnish and wood smoke from the potbelly stove."

Which of the 5 senses does this sentence of descriptive writing appeal to?

smell

taste

touch

hearing

7. Which of the following is something you would be most likely to do CAUTIOUSLY?

walk across a slippery floor

eat your favorite meal when you are hungry

read the next book in a series that you enjoy

tell your best friend about your summer vacation

8. Which sentence describes a person who acted NERVOUSLY?

The soccer player scored the winning goal for his team.

The zookeeper couldn't stop smiling about the birth of the baby panda.

The actress felt unsure of her lines, so she trembled as she took to the stage for her audition.

The mayoral candidate told voters that she would oversee the completion of a new library building.

9. If a task URGENTLY needs to be done, which of the following must be true?

- It needs to be done in the future.
- It needs to be done for another person.
- It needs to be done without complaining.
- It needs to be done right away.

10. Which of the following is the correct definition for the word CONFIDENTLY?

- in a manner that shows a lack of courage or confidence
- in a rash, illogical manner
- in a manner resulting from or showing anger
- in a self-assured way that expresses faith in oneself or one's abilities or qualities

11. The Aboriginals are 1 of the ___ native groups of Australia.

- 5
- 2
- 3
- 4

12. The Aborigines Act (1906-1954) was an act that removed about 100,000 children from their tribal lands and placed them in the care of the state. It was

_____.

- unethical & disliked by the Aboriginal people
- ethical & liked by the Aboriginal people
- an act that experienced equal amounts of support & opposition from the Aboriginal people
- an insignificant event in the history of the Aboriginal people