

Nonfiction is Fun: Independent Beginning Readers and Non-Fiction Books

Purpose:

I propose buying a selection of level 1 and 2 Beginning Nonfiction paperback books on a variety of topics to use with First Graders. As we all know, non-fiction reading has great appeal to young children who are curious about the world and are eager to learn about a variety of topics. However, non-fiction reading and writing require a set of skills and a foundation of knowledge that is different from reading fiction. The reader has different goals and must use different strategies. I plan to teach a set of comprehension and information processing skills for extracting the information from these books and then helping students to create *Voice thread* “books” to share their new knowledge.

Rationale:

At College Gate, we have students, particularly males in first grade, who are in danger of falling behind in the key areas of reading, research and writing. We need something different—we are trying traditional approaches with textbooks and reading programs but we need something that will appeal to our uninspired non-readers.

Nonfiction paperbacks appeal to beginning readers because they contain information on concrete topics that are interesting to them. These nonfiction beginning readers both entertain and educate, but they also can be used to teach reading skills.

General Approach:

Students will be exposed to the non-fiction books and will learn how to “read” nonfiction books. Next, students will practice using these skills on their own. They will study the graphics while practicing their visual literacy skills. They will discuss the information with their peers, and record--in their own words--the important information they are gathering from their reading. They will also make their own illustrations to support their understandings. Finally, they will use their research to create a *Voice thread* “book”. As a culminating activity, we want to have the children share their work with their parents at a school book /film festival.

We are excited about the fact that we feel this project will enable students to read and work cooperatively in a non-competitive way.

Program Structure & Capacity:

- 1) Grades in which the Project will be implemented: **Grade 1**
- 2) Anticipated number of students involved in the Project : **20**
- 3) Tentative schedule: **Every Friday from 2:30-3:30**

Evaluation:

Evaluation is both formative and summative. The teacher/librarian will observe attitudes toward the nonfiction paperbacks and the writing/research process and will make anecdotal notes in her journal. Students will use their “research” to create a *Voice thread* “book” which will be analyzed using a teacher-made rubric.

Potential Outcomes:

We anticipate that students reading skills will improve by at least 1.5 grade levels.

We also anticipate that:

- 1) Students will improve their reading skills (especially critical reading, reasoning and recall) by reading nonfiction books
- 2) Students will improve their vocabulary
- 3) Students will improve their attitude toward reading
- 4) Students will improve their writing skills

Budget:

We propose using the funds from this mini grant to purchase an array of age-appropriate nonfiction paperback books for the first graders in this project.

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST: \$250.00

CILC Mini-Grant

Contact Information Sheet

Grant Title: **Nonfiction is Fun: Independent Beginning Readers and Non-Fiction Books**

Summary: At College Gate, we have students, particularly males in first grade, who are in danger of falling behind in the key areas of reading, research and writing. We need something different—we are trying traditional approaches with textbooks and reading programs but we need something that will appeal to our uninspired non-readers. This grant proposes buying a selection of level 1 and 2 Beginning Nonfiction paperback books on a variety of topics to use with First Graders. Students will learn comprehension and information processing skills for extracting the information from these books and then create a *Voice thread* “books” to share their new knowledge.

Grant Applicants: Dona Helmer, librarian

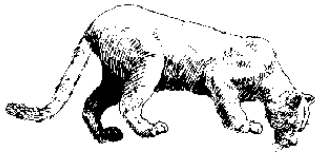
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School: College Gate Elementary School

Address: 3101 Sunflower Street
 Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: 907 -742-1500

Grant Request \$250.00



College Gate Elementary
3101 Sunflower Street
Anchorage, AK 99508

December 18, 2008

Cortney Barce, CILC Mini-Grant Chair
Ptarmigan School

Dear Ms. Barce,

Thank you for taking time to read my proposal for *Nonfiction is Fun: Independent Beginning Readers and Non-Fiction Books*.

College Gate Elementary School is a school that is changing. It is not a Title 1 school and we really do not have a lot of extra funds to provide opportunities for our students. Over one-half our students are eligible for free/reduced breakfast and lunch. I would like to have a special project that works with a group of first graders in the library on Fridays. I am especially concerned about our first graders who are in danger of falling behind in their reading skills because they are simply not interested.

I think if I can harness the popularity of nonfiction and use it to teach reading, writing and research outside of the regular classroom and with the teacher's help that I will have a sure-fire-winner that will be successful. I am also excited about taking it one step further by combining it with technology to produce a *Voice thread* book with these students.

Thank you for reviewing my application.

Sincerely,

Dona Helmer, librarian