



Accelerated Literacy Learning

Course Overview

This course will provide you with all of the background knowledge, experiences, and resources necessary to conduct an informed opinion letter unit of study with young children. By guiding you step-by-step through the process of creating your own genre-specific piece of writing, you will be empowered to teach through example. The framers of the Common Core State Standards rightly believe that opinion/argument writing is a vital part of college readiness, and this course will prepare you to set the youngest students on the path towards post high-school success. Through short videos, quizzes, reflection journals, opinion polls, and a review of a vast array of resources you will build your own reservoir of knowledge to conduct this writing unit confidently and in accordance with national guidelines. As a professional developer, a teacher, and a mother of two sons, I am personally thrilled to share this course with you, as I believe strongly in the power of writing to connect all of us to who we are, what is important to us, and what we believe in.

Topics by Session

Session 1 – Creating a Rationale for Informed Opinion Letters Through a Careful Analysis of the CCSS

- Familiarize yourself with the organization of the Common Core State Standards, in particular the relationship between anchor and grade level standards
- Orient Informed Opinion Letters into the framework of the 3 CCSS required “Text Types”
- Develop a clear understanding of the language shifts contained within the Argument writing standard Kindergarten through 6th grade
- Think about the requirement the CCSS makes that students create opinions about both topics and texts
- Reflect on the subtle but distinct differences between persuasion and argument as laid out in the CCSS Appendix C

Session 2 – Generating Opinions in a Variety of Ways

- Generate opinions based on your professional experiences in schools
- Link the formation of opinions to observation
- Develop protocols for encouraging young students to orally express opinions about meaningful topics
- Select an idea for your own informed opinion letter

Session 3- Letters as a Writing Genre

- Read a variety of letters written by children
- Name the different types of letters by examining their purpose
- Reflect upon the importance of audience to this genre
- Identify the parts of a letter

Session 4- Linking Opinions to Strong Research

- Build strategies for conducting developmentally appropriate research with young children
- Connect the concept of research to activating background knowledge
- Research your own topic in a variety of authentic ways- using both print and non-print resources

Session 5- Revision

- Draft your own informed opinion letter using a template
- Distinguish between revision and editing as distinct parts of the writing process
- Rethink your opinion statement to make sure it is clear and supported by your research
- Identify the most convincing reasons for your opinion letter by thinking carefully about audience
- Make a child-friendly checklist that can guide the revision process for your students

Session 6- Celebrating and Reflecting

- Make plans to celebrate student writing in your classroom
- Reflect on your own writing process
- Take a self-assessment in order to clarify your new learning and think about your next steps as a learner

Throughout the course, opportunities are provided for teachers to connect their learning across sessions and to explicitly consider the implications of that learning for classroom practice. Teachers will also be able to revisit their work and reflections by viewing their individual Course Portfolios.