1a. Central focus of the segment

The central focus relates to the development of library literacies necessary to read enthusiastically. This learning segment is designed to increase students’ love of reading by helping them connect with books that match their own unique interests and needs. By empowering students to speak to a librarian for readers’ advisory (RA) or to research books online, I hope to support their development as lifelong readers. (RA is the process by which librarians connect patrons with materials for leisure reading.) The central focus is: Students will learn the following techniques to help them plan their individual reading: 1) Reflection that connects personal responses to past reading with current and future interests, needs, conditions, and goals. 2) Summarization and retelling of details about books they are currently reading. 3) Research and selection of RA tools they can use to identify possible books and authors for their “next read.”

1b. Context of the lesson plans and collaboration with classroom teachers

With my mentor teacher, I approached two 5th-grade teachers who had sent students to the library in the past to work on individual reading. They identified current students who were reading just below standard. They shared with me that the questions that these students were having trouble with were about theme, summarization, and retelling details. Because research tells us that motivation plays a role in reading comprehension (John T. Guthrie, Angela McRae, et al., “Impacts of Comprehensive Reading Instruction on Diverse Outcomes of Low- and High-Achieving Readers,” in Journal of Learning Disabilities, 2009), I decided to link the library literacies of information literacy and digital literacy to the role of choice in independent reading in building student literacy. The abilities to find and evaluate help students to become enthusiastic readers. The language functions I selected for the lessons (reflect, discuss, summarize, retell, research, and select) link back to students’ abilities to find and evaluate, either in conversation with a librarian or through the use of digital tools, books students can read with enthusiasm.

Lesson 1 teaches a deepened method of RA that encourages students to reflect on multiple factors that affect reading choice (David Beard and Kate Vo Thi-Beard, “Rethinking the Book: New Theories for Readers’ Advisory,” in Reference and User Services Quarterly, 2008). Lesson 2 incorporates the classroom teachers’ observations about what the students needed to practice (summarization, theme, and retelling detail) into a discussion of what students could tell a librarian about a book they love. Lesson 3 introduces students to online resources that they can use independently to research their next read.

1c. How central focus and learning targets address thinking, reading, research, or use of information

The central focus is aligned with library literacies necessary to become enthusiastic readers, supporting the development of students’ abilities to find and evaluate books they will love. Information literacy is supported through the language functions of reflect, summarize, discuss, and retell, so that students can communicate with librarians for meaningful RA. Digital literacy is supported through the language functions of research and select, so that students can use digital tools to identify possible books they can check out and read enthusiastically. The learning target (LT) in Lesson 1 is, “I can reflect on at least two factors that affect my reading choices and discuss them with others,” and the standards are AASL 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience, and CCSS SL 5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly, indicator d., Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions. This LT and the standards with which it aligns support the development of the library literacies necessary for students to become
enthusiastic readers by teaching students factors to consider when they are choosing books. The method of RA on which this lesson is based (Beard and Thi-Beard, 2008) encourages students to reflect on factors that affect reading choices, such as where we read and when we read. Students reflect on previous knowledge, experience, interests, and needs to provide information that will help a librarian provide guidance about book choices. Because RA is a process that takes place in discussion with a librarian, students are given time during the lesson to reflect on these questions and to discuss them with their peers.

In Lesson 2, the LT is, “I can summarize a book I enjoy and retell one piece of important information such as plot, theme, setting, or character.” The standards are AASL 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and to previous knowledge and experience, and CCSS RL 5.2 Determine the theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. This LT and the standards with which it aligns address the development of library literacies necessary for students to become enthusiastic readers by teaching them ways to describe books they love to a librarian for RA. If they can accurately summarize and retell important information about a book they have read, students can better identify what they like and don’t like in a book. This accurate description can help them find books that meet their needs, forging a personal, lifelong connection with and enthusiasm for reading.

The LT for the Lesson 3 is “I can select two resources where I can research my next read.” The standards are AASL 1.2.2 Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information and CCSS W 5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. This LT and the standards with which it aligns support the development of library literacies necessary for students to become enthusiastic reading by teaching students to use online RA tools independently. Students apply the knowledge gained through reflection, discussion, summarization, and retelling to research conducted in 3 online tools (the school’s library catalog, NoveList K-8, and literature-map.com) and selection of one of the tools to lead them to a book they will enjoy. By building awareness of online research sources and confidence in their own ability to use them, this lesson will give students the ability to find materials, independently and safely, that they can read with enthusiasm.

1d. Explaining how lessons build on each other

The lesson plans build on each other to help make connections between student learning and enthusiastic reading by giving students tools to find reading material that is just right for them. Research shows that independent reading and student choice build literacy (Katrina W. Hall, Wanda B. Hedrick, and Lunetta M. Williams, “Every Day We’re Shufflin’: Empowering Students During In-School Independent Reading,” in Childhood Education, 2014). When we teach students multiple ways to connect their goals and interests to their reading choices and give them time to practice these methods, they forge a personal connection to the books they choose. These personal connections increase their interest in reading and their motivation to read. The lessons build on each other by 1) activating students’ prior knowledge of their own reading habits, 2) requiring them to connect to previous knowledge and experience by applying ideas of theme, plot, setting, and character to independent reading choice, and 3) synthesizing the knowledge gained in the first two lessons by using it to conduct research about and select online tools.

1e. Opportunities to express learning targets (Washington State only).

LTs are introduced to students at the beginning of each lesson. Students read the LTs aloud and repeat them in chorus, and we will spend time talking about why they are important at the beginning of instruction during each lesson. Exit tickets and/or assessments require them to state what they have learned at the end of each lesson and why it is important. The LT is posted so throughout the lesson. Students use the tool of exit tickets and the strategies of whole-class discussion, written reflection, and one-on-one discussion to communicate their understanding of LTs.

2a. Summary of students’ prior knowledge

This group of students is made up of 5th graders who are slightly behind grade level for this time of year in assessments. They are not far enough behind to qualify for tutoring but their teachers believe that they will benefit from small-group
instruction in the library. I viewed their checkout histories before I met with them, so I know that they all check books out of the library but not very often. Their classes visit the library once a week for 30 minutes. I know from talking with their teachers that they are on track academically, for the most part. I know the areas where they are still learning (retelling detail, identifying theme, summarizing) because teachers shared assessment data with me, including the questions where these students need support. One student has a 504 plan for ADHD. Her teacher was not able to share the plan with me, but she said that the supports that work for this student in class are repetition of directions and written directions.

2b. Summary of student assets

Before meeting with this group of students, I printed list of the books these students had checked out in the past. These lists seemed like a natural starting point for a lesson segment with a central focus of planning future reading. How had students chosen books to check out previously? I used these lists in my first conversations with the students, where they shared information with me about why they had chosen these particular books (e.g. “I really, really like fairies,” and “I like how Calvin and Hobbes are funny”). I was able to use these booklists as starting points for conversations about home life, interests, and values. A student who is homeless talked about how poetry can make her feel safe and loved by family. She has three brothers and sisters, and her mom is single. A different student talked about checking a book out for her older brother. I talked with a student during checkout about helping him find more adventure stories, and we talked about how he liked to discuss his reading with his dad. Another student liked sports, so I made a note to refer to books about sports during instruction.

3a. Selecting learning activities based on prior knowledge and other assets

I designed the learning segment around research that links choice in independent reading to confidence, comprehension, and literacy (Guthrie, Coddington, et al., 2009 and Hall, Hedrick, and Williams, 2014). These students did not have identified learning disabilities other than the student who has a 504 plan, so I focused on connections they had already made to independent reading and choice. To support the student who has ADHD, I added clear, explicit directions, particularly around academic language functions, (Joseph Johnson and Robert Reid, “Overcoming Executive Function Deficits With Students with ADHD,” in Theory Into Practice, 2011) as well as varied ways to interact with learning, such as iPads, visual images to associate with language functions in the slides, and opportunities to speak, write, and listen (Rena B. Lewis, John J. Wheeler, and Stacy L. Carter, Teaching Students with Special Needs in General Education Classrooms (9th ed.), 2016). Because they had all checked out books from the library before, I was able to design lessons that would help them use those choices to determine what was important to them in reading, to practice identifying important information such as theme and setting, and to use technology to apply what they learned about their reading to find books independently In Lesson 1, the LT was to reflect and discuss. In instruction, I referred to our conversations about the books they loved reading and the things they had shared with me about their personal lives and interests in Lesson 1. In Lesson 2, I asked them to bring a book they loved so they could practice summarizing and retelling as they would to communicate with a librarian for RA. In Lesson 3, I had them recall a recent collaborative lesson we did with the 5th grade teachers. Students came to the library to find books for small-group research projects. I asked them to build on that experience of research and selection when we researched and selected online RA tools.

3b. Identifying tools or strategies to progress toward targets

Students will identify the tools on exit tickets and practice the strategies of repetition, whole-class discussion, small-group discussion, one-on-one discussion, and writing. I explicitly link the LT to those activities during the lessons.

3c. Selecting learning activities for the whole-class and individuals

One student has a 504 plan for ADHD. To support her, I added clear, explicit directions, particularly around academic language functions, (Johnson and Reid, 2011) as well as varied ways to interact with learning, such as iPads, visual images to associate with language functions in the slides, and opportunities to speak, write, and listen (Lewis, Wheeler, and Carter, 2016). I also placed directions on slides where she could read and refer to them, because her classroom teacher told me that she did well with repeated directions and repetition. All of the students in this class have been
identified as being struggling readers, so the class itself is a support that helps them connect personally with independent reading through RA tools and strategies.

3d. Addressing preconceptions, errors, misunderstandings

A common preconception about finding new books to read is that RA is about finding books that are similar to ones you already like. This is certainly a powerful strategy for RA, but Beard and Thi-Beard (2008) theorize that thinking about factors such as where, when, and how students read are just as important. I address this preconception by teaching two ways of thinking about books in lessons 1 and 2. Lesson 1 teaches the Beard and Thi-Beard strategy, and the second covers the idea of finding books like one you are reading, but with a lens of identifying theme, character, setting, and plot. Another preconception is that “just looking around” is the only way to new books to read. Lesson 3 addresses this preconception by teaching students to use online resources that they can consult independently.

4a. Identifying the language function

From Lesson 1, a language function is reflect. This language function supports the central focus, (students will learn techniques to help them plan their individual reading), and the AASL standard with which it is aligned (AASL 4.1 5 Connect ideas to own interests and to previous knowledge and experience). It helps students develop library literacies necessary to read enthusiastically by teaching techniques and resources students can use to identify what they liked about previous books (Lesson 2), discuss those books as well as other factors that affect their reading with others (Lesson 1), and conduct research independently about books they may want to read in the future (Lesson 3). The strategy for reflect is to recall a previous experience and then connect it back to the work we are doing today.

4b. Learning activities enabling practice with the language function

In Lesson 1, students will use a graphic organizer to collect answers to questions that require them to reflect on factors that affect their reading. These questions include where they read, when they read, who they discuss books with, and what their goals are for reading.

4c. Additional language demands

The vocabulary words associated with the language function reflect in Lesson 1 are factors and affect. The discourse students will use to practice reflection includes whole-group discussion, small-group discussion, and writing short answers.

4d. Supporting student language use

The supports students will use in Lesson 1 to practice the language function reflect include activation of prior knowledge when students recall previous discussions with me about books they have read and enjoyed. During the lesson, students use supports of teacher-led discussion, small-group discussion, a picture of a cat looking at a reflection of itself, slides with the academic language, the graphic organizer. After the lesson, they will use the support of an exit ticket that requires them to restate the LT, including the language function reflect, and to write about why the LT is important.

5a. Assessing student learning

Because we have 25-30 minutes for each lesson, assessments are brief but effective. I will use pre- and post-assessments that start by asking students to choose a sentence that describes their feelings about their ability to find a book to read in the library. My goal is to help them progress from wherever they start toward greater confidence in their ability to locate engaging books during check-out. In all three lessons, informal assessments of fist-to-five and thumbs-up/thumbs-down help students express their own understandings of how they are progressing toward the LT. In all three lessons, assessing by listening to students during whole-class discussion and turn-and-talk will help me learn where they are in relationship to the LT for the day and adjust my lesson accordingly. Students practice engaging with the LTs in lessons 1 and 3 by using graphic organizers. After all three lessons, students restate the LT on an exit ticket or
post-assessment. Lessons 1 and 2 also require them to reflect on why the LT is important, and after Lesson 2, they assess their own learning and performance.

5b. Adapting lessons

Requiring students to write as well as speak as they learn helps them practice their learning in varied ways. Because these students are struggling readers, the extra small-group practice provided by this learning segment is in itself a support. Additionally, the repetition of the LT throughout each lesson and the varied ways of interaction with it, such as whole-group discussion, writing, and small-group discussion, will support the student who has a 504 plan for ADHD.

5c. Student reflection (Washington state only)

After each lesson, students restate the LT and reflect on why it is important to learn. After Lesson 2, students write about what they did well and what they could have done better. Students are asked to be specific about plans for applying the knowledge they have gained during the learning segment in the post-assessment: they will about their plans for choosing the next book they will read, and they will identify tools they can use to help identify potential books or authors.