Lesson/Unit Name: Thunder Cake
Content Area: English/language arts in grades K-2
Grade Level: K

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:
✓ Targets a set of K-2 ELA/Literacy CCSS for teaching and learning.
✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
✓ Selects quality text(s) that align with the requirements outlined in the standards, presents characteristics similar to CCSS K-2 exemplars (Appendix B), and are of sufficient scope for the stated purpose.
✓ Provides opportunities for students to present ideas and information through writing and/or drawing and speaking experiences.

A unit or longer lesson should:
☐ Emphasize the explicit, systematic development of foundational literacy skills (concepts of print, phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, high frequency sight words, and phonics).
☐ Regularly include specific fluency-building techniques supported by research (e.g., monitored partner reading, choral reading, repeated readings with text, following along in the text when teacher or other fluent reader is reading aloud, short timed practice that is slightly challenging to the reader).
☐ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
☐ Build students’ content knowledge in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through a coherent sequence of texts and series of questions that build knowledge within a topic.

Targets Standards: Standards specific to the lesson are listed on page 1. However, of the 11 standards listed for 60 minutes of instruction, there are many that are not directly addressed in the lesson. The standards that are not directly addressed might be best described as supporting standards rather than targeted standards. For example, there is substantial attention to RL.3 (identify characters, settings, and major events) in the lesson. Therefore, RL. 3 is a focus standard. There is also a focus on RL.4 (unknown words in a text). On the other hand, L.4 (unknown or multiple-meaning words in kindergarten reading and content) is found once in the lesson: page 3, in the second reading when "the teacher could elect to linger on the multiple meaning of the word 'draw'". L.4 would be appropriately cited as a supporting standard.

Purpose for Instruction: The purpose of the unit is stated on page 1 under Lesson Objective. "Students will listen to an illustrated picture book read aloud and use literacy skills (reading, writing, discussion and listening) to understand the characters' lesson in the story. Under Teacher Instructions on page 1 a Focusing Question is provided. "What did Patricia learn about herself?" Suggestion: Consider changing "...characters’ lesson..." to "character's lesson" because the focus is on only what lesson Patricia learned and on no other characters in the story. Also, rethink the Big Idea/Key Understanding. For example, it states, "Patricia realizes that she is able to overcome her fears with support of others and by being brave." As stated, the Key Understanding is the answer for the focusing question rather than a Big Idea. Consider a big idea such as, "Sometimes we fear things that really don't need to be feared".

Selects Quality Texts: The lesson is built around Thunder Cake by Patricia Polacco. The developer clearly identifies the complexity of the text. The cover page of the lesson states that Thunder Cake is at the 630 Lexile level. An analysis of "What Makes This Text Complex" is also included with the lesson.

Students Present Ideas and Information: The read aloud and text dependent question discussions allow students to present ideas through speaking experiences. The lesson includes opportunities for both shared presentation of learning (charts) and shared writing for the question of "What did Patricia learn about herself?" The culminating task allows students to demonstrate their understanding through either writing or drawing.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension
### Dimension III – Instructional Supports

**The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:**

- Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing, and speaking about texts.
- Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use for teachers (e.g., clear directions, sample proficient student responses, sections that build teacher understanding of the whys and how of the material).
- Integrates targeted instruction in multiple areas such as grammar and syntax, writing strategies, discussion rules and aspects of foundational reading.
- Provides substantial materials to support students who need more time and attention to achieve automaticity with decoding, phonemic awareness, fluency and/or vocabulary acquisition.

**Interest & Engagement:** The lesson includes many activities designed to promote student engagement with the text. The first read-aloud is for enjoyment and would generate interest. Questions, graphic organizers, and students acting out portions of the text contribute to student engagement. However, this component in Domain III goes beyond simply cultivating student interest and engagement. In its entirety it requires that a lesson "cultivates student interest in reading, writing, and speaking about texts." As the lesson is written, it is not explicit that students engage in discussions about the text. Also, the only evidence of student writing is in the culminating task. Consider explicitly stating when students turn and talk, think-pair-share, and/or partner share during discussion times. It would strengthen the lesson to include opportunities for students to engage in writing activities throughout the lesson to scaffold proficiency along the way.

**Addresses Instructional Expectations/Ease of Use:** The lesson addresses the expectation set forth in the objective. The format of the lesson is easy to understand and use. For example, directions are clear with specific hints for adaptations or replication in other contexts. It is acceptable in a...
**A unit or longer lesson should:**

- Include a progression of learning where concepts, knowledge and skills advance and deepen over time (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- Gradually remove supports, allowing students to demonstrate their independent capacities (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills and/or student-directed inquiry.
- Indicate how students are accountable for independent engaged reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

**Provides all students (including emergent and beginning readers) with extensive opportunities to engage with grade-level texts and read alouds that are at high levels of complexity including appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of text.**

**Focuses on sections of rich text(s) (including read alouds) that present the greatest challenge; provides discussion questions and other supports to promote student engagement, understanding and progress toward independence.**

- Integrates appropriate, extensive and easily implemented supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities and/or read or write below grade level.
- Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read or write above grade level.

**Integrates Supports of ELL and Students with Disabilities/Reading Below Grade Level:**

- The lesson provides alternate opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through kinesthetic and visual supports.
- The developer does state that the teacher implementing the lesson should "evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions", but appropriate, extensive and easily implemented supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities and/or read or write below grade level are not included in the lesson. The final day with the book calls for students to independently respond to the question (What did Patricia learn about herself?) from the point to view of Patricia. The option is given for students who are not yet capable of expressing themselves through written response to be allowed to respond through drawing. However, drawing is not below-grade-level for kindergarten.

**Integrates Targeted Instruction in Multiple Areas:**

- Provides Extensions: The developer includes a list of "Fun Extension Activities" that are appropriate for the whole class and not specifically targeting students who read well above grade level. Consider extension activities that are not simply other things to do but are instead activities which increase rigor. Furthermore, explicitly integrating discussion.

**Substantial Materials for Automaticity in Decoding, Phonemic Awareness, Fluency, and/or Vocabulary Acquisition:** There is attention to vocabulary acquisition throughout the lesson. However, it is not clear how or if students will be expected to use the vocabulary that is highlighted.

**Foundational Skills:**

- Foundational skills are not included in the lesson, but it should be clear to a teacher implementing the lesson that explicit skills instruction is during another segment of the school day outside of this lesson. It would strengthen the lesson to indicate how the teacher might reinforce acquired foundational reading skills through authentic connected texts.

**Focus on Rich Sections of the Text:**

- The lesson focuses on a whole group read-aloud of a text that is sufficiently complex for kindergarten. A balance of literal and inferential text dependent questions are included to provide students with opportunities to experience the complexity of the text.

**Integrates Targeted Instruction in Multiple Areas:**

- Because this is a lesson, it is understandable that not all areas of integration would be included. However, given the targeted standards (W2, SL1, SL2, SL6), the lesson does lend itself for integration of writing strategies and discussion rules. Integration of writing strategies and discussion rules is not explicitly stated to indicate whether they are an intention of the lesson.
strategies that ensure secure students are also advancing their understanding would strengthen the lesson. The task of writing from the perspective of Patricia will likely be challenging for kindergarten students unless they are writing above grade level; however, it is presented as the culminating task for all students.

Rating: 2 – Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

Dimension IV – Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate foundational skills and targeted grade level literacy CCSS (e.g., reading, writing, speaking and listening and/or language).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance and responding to areas where students are not yet meeting standards.</td>
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</tbody>
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A unit or longer lesson should:

| ☐ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. |

Direct Observable Evidence: Evidence of learning during the days prior to the culminating task are whole group, and; therefore, would not give evidence of students’ independent proficiency. Many opportunities exist from which observable evidence of student learning of the CCSS could be elicited. Because these opportunities are not explicitly stated in the lesson, it is not clear as to how formative and/or student self-assessment will be captured to scaffold learning and from which student proficiency can be built to prepare for the culminating task. In the culminating task the students write to answer the question "What did Patricia learn about herself?" However, the writing is narrative in that the task’s student example tells the story from a character’s viewpoint. W.3 (narrative) is not a standard listed by the developer as being targeted. The lesson does not target foundational skills.

Unbiased and Accessible: A culminating task is included in the lesson that provides multiple routes for students to demonstrate learning. For example, "If students are not yet capable of expressing themselves through written response, they can respond through drawing...conferring with students...and allow them to give an oral explanation to the question."

Aligned Rubrics or Assessment Guidelines: Charts and graphic organizers are included in the lesson from which students can visually track information during the close reads; however, these are not used for assessment purposes but instead for instructional aids. There is a sample response included for the culminating task, but there are no guidelines or rubric to identify levels of proficiency. The culminating task aligns with RL.3, but the W.3 writing type (narrative) should be included as a targeted CCSS to tighten the alignment of the lesson. Suggestions: Include a checklist or rubric for the summative assessment. A brief checklist or rubric of discussion rules aligned to the targeted Speaking and Listening standards could provide guidance to students about the success criteria for effective discussion and serve as potential formative assessment for the teacher and self-assessment for students.

Rating: 1 – Meets some of the criteria in the dimension

Summary Comments

The lesson is designed to be implemented over 4 days with 20 minutes per day for a total of approximately 60 minutes of instruction. Utilizing a quality text (Thunder Cake by Patricia Polacco) the developer presents a lesson that effectively leads students through a progression of close readings with deepening purpose for each reading.

Addressing the provided suggestions for Dimensions I - IV would easily move the lesson to an exemplar rating. A possible path for addressing the suggestions would be to consider which of the standards listed on page 1 of the lesson are to be the targeted standards. With a more targeted focus specific supports, extensions, and assessments would become manageable.
Rating Scales

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:
3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension
2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension
1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension
0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:
E: Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (total 11 – 12)
E/I: Exemplar if Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (total 8 – 10)
R: Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (total 3 – 7)
N: Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (total 0 – 2)

Rating Descriptors
Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:
3: Exemplifies CCSS Quality - meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.
2: Approaching CCSS Quality - meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
1: Developing toward CCSS Quality - needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
0: Not representing CCSS Quality - does not address the criteria in the dimension.

Descriptor for Overall Ratings:
E: Exemplifies CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.
E/I: Approaching CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.
R: Developing toward CCSS Quality – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.
N: Not representing CCSS Quality – Not aligned and does not address criteria.