EQuIP Review Feedback

Lesson/Unit Name: Varying Perspectives on World War II  
Content Area: English language arts  
Grade Level: 8

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 grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
- Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
- Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A & B).

A unit or longer lesson should:

- Integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
- (Grades 3-5) Build students’ content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science, or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.

Standards: This unit addresses a set of 8th grade ELA CCSS. The focus is on long term targets, such as RI8.4 – vocabulary and RI8.1 – citing textual evidence, as well as on supporting goals specific to each lesson and text in the set. The inclusion of RL along with RI standards for a literary non-fiction text that has the structure and qualities of a novel is wise. Within this sort of literary non-fiction many elements associated with fiction may be fruitfully addressed.

The content purpose is clear: develop background knowledge around the Pacific theater and to begin the reading of “Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption.” The overview provided in the unit also explains the interdisciplinary approach with history by providing the guiding questions and big ideas for the social studies aspects of the unit. The overview allows the instructor to monitor the standards being addressed in every lesson, whether as a long or short term focus.

There is a well-balanced text set provided in the overview. The anchor text is literary non-fiction, while the rest of the text set has speeches, essays, and art. The scope of the unit may make it difficult to balance the reading of the biography with the texts around WWII. The developer could look for ways to make the connections between the works clearer and have more activities that make the biography the central text for discussion.

There is a combination of reading informational, reading literature, language, and speaking and listening standards addressed throughout the unit. However, while writing is in place through graphic organizers and the final exit ticket, specific writing standards are not directly stated in this unit. The language skills addressed appear to lead to a future unit, where writing could be more explicitly taught. This appears evident because several times the teacher notes state that the students have begun the protocols in the previous unit of study. A suggestion is to use the quick write allusion and final exit ticket as a means to incorporate a writing standard.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:

- Reading Text Closely: Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction.
- Text-Based Evidence: Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions

Several close reading strategies are used throughout the unit. Rereading a piece of text is used daily through teacher modeling fluency to independent homework. Lesson three is dedicated to close reading through vocabulary and text-dependent questioning strategies. An additional close reading strategy that might improve the lessons, is to include more annotations for language standards while students read along. The developer may also consider providing the primary texts in both chunked and whole versions allowing students to develop broader claims and supporting those claims with text-based evidence. The developer should also consider including more opportunities for students to clarify their thinking bringing key ideas
A unit or longer lesson should:

- **Increasing Text Complexity**: Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.

- **Building Disciplinary Knowledge**: Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.

- **Balance of Texts**: Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).

- **Balance of Writing**: Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.

**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.

- Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.

- Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.

- Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the
together around the primary texts and the novel as well as opportunities to draw connections between these works.

Students are continuously asked to use text evidence to support their analysis. For example, they are asked to identify context clues when unknown vocabulary is encountered. Also, on each graphic organizer, students are asked to use text evidence. For instance, on the graphic organizer for FDR and the Fourteen-Part Message, students are asked to identify specific actions that took place, and then to further analyze whether or not, they were a cause in the war. Text dependent questions are given to students throughout the unit on the homework: Unbroken structured notes. One consideration for the developer in this regard would be to pay attention to the scaffolding. The focus of the questions for which evidence is necessary is so scaffolded and supported that is not clear if students can find evidence on their own. This concern is true of the parallel work done with Unbroken. Since this is the first unit of the year, the concerns expressed here can be addressed in the arc of units across the year.

Students are asked to write from sources on graphic organizers, structured notes, sentence strips, quick writes and exit tickets. There is not a formal essay in this unit, however there is a balance of evidence based writing throughout the unit that would lend itself to the larger formal essay that occurs in unit three.

Academic vocabulary is identified at the beginning of each lesson for the teacher. Academic vocabulary is addressed on a daily basis with the students. Vocabulary is presented in many ways throughout the lesson. The developer should consider ways to consolidate the vocabulary work in a way that has students focus their attention on some of the new words they have encountered. These activities might be ones that help students make increasing vocabulary an intentional activity. (See assessment)
Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.

A unit or longer lesson should:

- Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (may be more applicable across the year or several units).
- Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (may be more applicable across the year or several units).
- Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.
- Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5.
- Indicate how students are accountable for independent 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.

needed resources. In addition, the teaching notes give a rationale for each lesson. Teachers will be able to place this unit into their curriculum with ease. The "meeting students' needs" section is also a helpful tool to address differentiation and scaffolding. More attention is needed in addressing advanced learners in this unit. The developer might consider including more direction for how able students might engage with the central texts more independently while reading more connected text and less scaffolded, chunked text. There are no considerations in this unit for how to engage more able students. The developer might consider adding some elements of student choice into the unit to allow for a some student directed inquiry. This element may be developed in later units.

Students are given the opportunity to read, reread, and listen to the texts. Students are also given an opportunity to use graphic organizers (some more structured than others) and to engage in collaborative conversations to help construct meaning. The explicit vocabulary instruction (Frayer Model, vocabulary squares, Give One, Get One, etc.) allow for all students to access the complex texts. The photographs used during the gallery walk in lesson 1, also allow for all students to draw conclusions about and discuss the subject matter. Also, the discussion appointments created in lesson 2 create mixed-ability groupings to "create a collaborative and supportive structure for reading complex texts."

This may be evident in future units, however there was not a gradual release during this unit. The homework was repetitive and very structured throughout. However, there was a gradual release in terms of reading and filling out graphic organizers throughout the daily lessons. A suggestion to make this release more evident is to vary the homework notes at times. Also, having students do more independent reading in class would increase this criteria. The developer should consider including more direction for how able students might engage with the central texts more independently while reading more connected text and less scaffolded, chunked text. There are no considerations in this unit for how to engage more able students.

There is a lot of application of literacy skills throughout the structured lessons. Listening is seen while the teacher models fluency, speaking and responding to others claims is seen during the fish bowl discussions, and writing is evident during the graphic organizers, quick write, exit ticket, and notes. Students are also able to reflect on their learning through the use of rubrics for the fish bowl discussion, and through the end of the lesson formative assessments. However, the formative assessments can be more reflective if students write or speak about their response to the fist to five or thumbs up/down. A list of ancillary texts is provided but no information is really provided on how this may be integrated into the unit and how reading the ancillary texts may be balanced with the consistent homework reading assigned for the biography.

There is targeted instruction (in context) for active/passive voice in lesson 10. This is where there is a nice shift to the study of author's craft. Revision is also taught during the Give One, Get One vocabulary activity. The quickwrite allusion writing requires a focus statement and conclusion, however there is not evidence of modeling this for the students. Discussion rules are given very clearly along with the sentence frames used during discussion.

There is no evidence of students reading independent books, however the reading list would be a great way to incorporate this. However, stamina seems to be built through the structured homework reading each evening.
Allowing for student choice in regards to independent reading may also be a great way to engage students as well.

The developer should consider ways to use technology and the rich media available for WW II to help create context for students. Media is used in lesson 1 during the gallery walk. A close reading of the pictures as text would deepen the level of meaning for students. More technology can be incorporated possibly during the formative assessment times. Providing videos of WWII events or audio clips of Roosevelt's speech and other non-print media in the unit.

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

Dimension IV – Assessment

The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:

- Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).
- Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.
- Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.

A unit or longer lesson should:

- Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.
- The unit does a strong job of highlighting formative practice (making instructional judgments from the flow of instruction). The unit does a strong job of using organizers, notes and questions to collect evidence of student learning. The graphic organizers prove to the teacher the ability of students to find text-based evidence. The formative and summative assessments outlined in the unit overview and lesson plans allows for all students to be assessed equally. There is a combination of writing and speaking, which allows students to express themselves the way they are comfortable. Graphic organizers, collaborative discussions, exit tickets, and the formative assessments (thumbs up/down & fist to five) all allow students to be assessed continuously.

- The fishbowl assessment is well-developed and gives teachers a direct way to see evidence of students' abilities for the speaking and listening standards. The scaffolded activities will allow teachers to see how well-prepared students are for structured discussion. There is a rubric provided for the fish bowl discussion which allows for both students and teachers to assess proficiency. More rubrics could be included to add to this unit. However, there are "expected" student responses given throughout the instructions that help a teacher know where to guide students. The instructions also make sure that the teacher follows up with the formative assessments used during the lessons.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

Summary Comments

This unit addresses its ELA standards through various modes, students will be engaged through various means, and it is easily constructed for all teachers to follow. Some adjustments to make are to have extension activities in place for advance learners, more explicit instruction in writing that allow students to explore and clarify their learning, and more variations for the homework activities and to make the biography more of an instructional focus--this may occur in later lessons. This unit has many of the qualities that are needed to increase student achievement and will be a great resource for the classroom teacher.

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.