

Lesson/Unit Name: Researching to Deepen Understanding

Content Area: English/language arts

Grade Level: 9-10

Reviewer 1

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

Overall Rating:

E

Exemplar

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.

Targets a Grade Level: Multiple CCSS in Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Reading are targeted.

Writing 7-9 is covered as research is based on focused questions, information is gathered from multiple sources, and evidence is used to support analysis.

Speaking and Listening 1 is targeted as students are engaged in discussions while forming their E-B Claims.

Reading for Information 10 is targeted as multiple opportunities have been created for the independent and proficient reading of complex texts.

Writing 4-5 is targeted as students must develop, organize and plan their writing that will be derived using a text-based perspective. Also Writing 2 is targeted as students are guided to create texts that convey ideas clearly and accurately.

These aforementioned CCSS are supported by the unit's focus on Reading Standards 1, 2, 4, 6,& 9. Students are required to make logical inferences and cite specific textual evidence, summarize key supporting details, interpret words and phrases, assess how point of view shapes content and style and analyze how two or more texts explores similar themes. This all done in order to build knowledge.

Includes a Clear Purpose: A clear and explicit purpose for instruction is given. The large goal of the unit is to use researching as a method to deepen understanding. A deep understanding of researching skills as well as content specific knowledge is a plausible result from using the unit. The unit under review is part three of a four part series on literacy instruction. Each of the four units are designed to be covered in three weeks. The units are each designed- as the publisher accurately points out- in a way that allows for flexibility in activity sequencing and ease in adapting to new texts and topics.

Correct Grade-level Texts: Texts have been selected from an appropriate text complexity band. The included Research Topic Repository models a set of common source documents and provides rationale for the selecting of two text types: A) readily comprehensible background texts and B) challenging and sophisticated texts from the upper end of the complexity band.

Integration: The integration of the language arts has been skillfully and intentionally derived such that students naturally apply and synthesize their literacy skills.

Suggested Improvements: The narrative on pages 2 and 3 places this unit in its context as part of a larger 4 unit series. This is not clearly delineated on the cover page. Also the Grades 7-12 label on the cover page causes pause.

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 about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).
- ✓ **Writing from Sources:** Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).
- ✓ **Academic Vocabulary:** Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.

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.

Reading Text Closely: Central focus of unit is examining texts closely

Text-based Evidence: Evidence -based discussion and writing is abundant.

Writing from Sources: The recursive use of reading and responding and making adjusted inquiries sufficiently requires students to write from sources.

Academic Vocabulary: Throughout instruction students are developing academic vocabulary. To facilitate explicit vocabulary instruction, notes for the instructor point towards the multiple exposures students will experience with key terms such as "analyze, perspective, questioning, and criteria".

Increasing Text Complexity: The list of sources in the repository and the narrative itself acknowledges need for increasing complexity and includes texts of varying modes and complexity. The unit builds towards the independent reading of College and Career Ready texts.

Disciplinary Knowledge: Students practice the process of inquiry research and while doing so the teacher may alter the topic under research to fit specific content areas. The model unit is on technology. Especially helpful at illustrating the plausibility of adapting this lesson for multiple topics is the inclusion of potential "Guiding Questions" found on page 5 of the Repository.

Balance of Texts: Informational and Literary texts are to be balanced within of an entire course. This unit is not an entire course and while it has a tremendous variety in text modality within in the informational framework, there is a distinct lack of literary texts. That is not to say the unit would be strengthened with a greater inclusion of literary texts. It just points to the need for additional units from the course to be equally heavy in literary texts to provide balance.

Balance of Writing: With the ability to adapt as needed, great potential variety exists. The student hand-outs for note taking and fact gathering, coupled with analysis and sharing can build to longer thesis-based research paper writing.

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 grade level text band.
- ✓ 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.

Cultivates Interest: The research begins by having students determine what it is they want to learn about a topic. This inquiry style will allow students to be engaged in their work. The individual conferences with teachers following the students' "pre-searches" will allow students to discuss their potential research framework.

Instructional Expectations: The materials clearly outline a sequence of learning. The three week long unit is broken down into 5 steps which thoughtfully move from "Initiating Inquiry" to "Gathering Information" to "Deepening Understanding" to "Finalizing Inquiry" and ends with "Communicating an Evidence-based Perspective" Each step contains 4-5 activities that move from teacher modeling, small group work to independent practice.

All Student Engagement: As noted above the activities in each step requires students to engage very specifically with the texts of their choice.

Challenging Sections: Because the students' reading will be centered on answering their own inquiries, the students will be deeply engaged with challenging portions of the texts as they search for the answers to their own questions. Teachers will have directed students into an appropriate text and engaging inquiry path during the initial conference scheduled after completing the pre-search.

ELL and Others Supported: An initial step requires students to conduct an independent search at home. The next day's lesson is dependent on students having completed this step. The scaffolding for completing homework is that students will first answer questions about the large group discussion. The handout referenced is titled "Exploring a Topic". Students are asked three questions about three potential areas of investigation. If completed independently at home or with the help of their "learning community" as suggested, this document will be useful in allowing the student and teacher to discuss what each student viewed as key dimensions about the topic discovered during the initial full class, teacher-led discussion of the topic. This document is not student friendly nor is it ready to use. * Typo in penultimate line: It reads "members their learning community" and "of" has been omitted prior to "their."

Extension Opportunities: Students who read well above grade level will likely select texts of a level appropriate for them when it comes time to select sources they view as relevant to their research frame.

Progression of Learning: As stated earlier, each step along the way gets progressively more difficult and the activities within each step also grow towards independent reading and writing.

Move to Independent: An example of the later steps being more difficult is in Part 4 of 5: "Finalizing Inquiry". After completing parts 1-3 students will have a collection of notes and analysis from several potential sources, and now the students' first activity is to review these notes. Next they organize them and begin to look for connections. They then judge their notes for relevance and finally they must use their own findings and feedback from others about their "Research Frames" to determine if and how to extend their research.

Authentic Application of Literacy Skills: Student-directed inquiry is the basis of this unit and so students will be authentically applying their literacy skills. Reading Stamina Based on Student Choice: Students will be setting their own purpose for reading new material which should build motivation and the collection of annotated articles, research notes, and inquiry paths they create will be kept in their portfolios which should enable teachers to assess how well these activities have aided the students in building independent reading stamina.

Technology Use: The collection of texts in the "Research Repository" are accessible on-line and the documents designed to help students vet the sources will give students confidence to find additional valid sources using technology.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all 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.

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).

Multiple student-created documents or products are created in each step. The teachers are directed at the conclusion of each of the five steps to assess these.

Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students. For example the list at the end of Part 2 "Gathering Information" delineates that students will have completed or produced five items: "Research Frame", "Potential Sources Tool", "Annotated Common Texts", "Annotated Sources" and a "Taking Notes Tool".

Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.

The "Research Criteria Matrix" to be used with the products created in Step 2 can be used independently both by the student and the teacher but it probably offers the most constructive feedback when first used by the student and then used jointly in a student-teacher conference mode.

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

The matrix referenced above is tailored specifically for assessing each section. Each of the five parts on the unit concludes with a list of documents that the students should have created and the corresponding section of the matrix can be used by the student and the teacher to assess the functionality and success at which a standard has been met.

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

Summary Comments

This is an exemplar unit. Only a few suggested areas for improvement noted in each dimension above.

Reviewer 2

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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). <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. 	<p>Targeted Standards: This unit addresses the following standards - R.1, R.2, R.4, R.9, W.2, W.4, W.5, W.7, W.8, W.9, SL.1, RI.10. Though the writing standard is informative/explanatory, citing the reading standards without denoting the particular strand is problematic. The targeted grades for the unit are 7th through 12th. As a result of the large grade range, attention must be given to the language of the standards and the progression of rigor increasing from one grade to the other.</p> <p>Purpose for Instruction: As part of a four unit series, Researching to Deepen Understanding is the third unit in the series aimed at "developing core proficiencies" of the student. It clearly indicates that the unit can either stand-alone or be integrated into larger modules. The purpose for instruction is stated explicitly on pages 1 and 2 of the unit: to develop exploratory proficiency by exploring topics, posing and refining questions and listening to experiences, discovering areas for investigation, determining level of comprehension, and finding information. Furthermore, page 2 (Research Framework) states, "The unit also develops and supports student ability to archive and organize information in order to see and analyze connections in ways that aid comprehension, deepen their understanding and prepare them to express their evolving perspective." Page 3 further outlines the unit structure by stating "Instruction in this unit is built around three components: a process for conducting research, a Research Portfolio developed by students throughout the process, and choosing a topic to research. The unit activities integrate these components in a learning progression that develops and supports proficiency in the entire research process." Moreover, page 3 outlines the instructional sequence in 5 parts and indicating that the sequence is recursive. Additionally, on page 5 it states "The unit is designed for adaption to the various contexts in which teachers want to develop their students' research proficiencies."</p> <p>Text Selection: On page 10 of the Research Topic Repository: Technology, the unit provides a list of common texts under the topic of Technology: The Advent and Impact of Social Media located through internet searches, including the location URLs and Text Complexity Lexile Range of each text (840L to 1420L), well within, and beyond, the range of the 7th through 12th grade text complexity demands.</p> <p>Integrating reading, writing, and speaking and listening: The 5 part unit fully integrates reading, writing and speaking and listening through a progression of activities that lead toward independence.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 	<p>Reading Text Closely: All 5 parts make reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction. More specifically, the activities in each part address examining evidence through reading, writing, and speaking and listening in an exemplary manner.</p> <p>Text-Based Evidence: The unit facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts by constructing evidence-based</p>
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<p>specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing from Sources: Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays). ✓ Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. 	<p>claims with guiding questions through the use of: an evidence-based claims criteria checklist, a text-centered discussion checklist with one area focusing on communicating ideas, claims and evidence, writing pieces that synthesizes evidence-based claims and perspective, a student research plan that includes developing an communicating an evidence-based perspective, a research criteria matrix for grades 9-12 that includes developing and communicating an evidence-based perspective, a worksheet for organizing evidence-based claims, and a rubric for forming evidence-based claims.</p> <p>Writing: Throughout the unit writing is an essential and integral part. This is further seen in the development of the Research Portfolio. Page 3 of the Research Framework states the following, "The Research Portfolio is a structured collection of the research and analysis that students compile in their investigation. The components of the portfolio guide and archive the student work in a way that teaches them key critical thinking, academic habits and organizational skills. By the end of the unit, students will have an organized structured set of sources, annotations, notes, and analysis from which they can successfully accomplish any purpose they may have for their newly developed evidence-based perspective, whether that be an academic research paper or the construction of a product or process plan."</p> <p>Academic Vocabulary: The unit explains how it teaches vocabulary on page 5 of the Research framework, "By drawing on a variety of strategies for teaching academic and disciplinary vocabulary, by the end of the unit, students will have developed a deep conceptual knowledge of key vocabulary that they can transfer to a variety of academic and public contexts." However, the only direct reference to vocabulary throughout the 5 parts is on page 23, Part 2, Activity #1, Instructional Notes on Choosing Key Words and Phrases. It is suggested that more of the same be consistently seen throughout the unit.</p> <p>Increasing Text Complexity: Page 10 of the Research Topic Repository: Technology, the unit provides a list of common texts under the topic of Technology: The Advent and Impact of Social Media located through internet searches, including the location URLs and Text Complexity Lexile Range of each text (840L to 1420L), well within, and beyond, the range of the 7th through 12th grade text complexity demands.</p> <p>Building Disciplinary Knowledge: The common texts, the 5 part instructional process, and the materials and rubrics all build knowledge in an exemplary fashion.</p> <p>Balance of Texts: All of the texts are expository in nature. The one poem, Why I Take Good Care of My Macintosh, is written as an argument.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: Throughout the unit writing is an essential and integral part of instruction.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in 	<p>Cultivates student interest and engagement: The units use of Technology as a topic and vehicle for students to become proficient in their ability to conduct research offers an opportunity to meet them where they are. On Page 3 of the Repository it states, Technology offers both teachers and</p>
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<p>reading, writing and speaking about texts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. ✓ Provides <i>all</i> 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 grade level text band. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ 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 (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. 	<p>students a wide array of options for investigation, based on the researcher's purpose and the anticipated outputs of the research: the uses that will be served and the products that may result."</p> <p>Provides all students - Throughout the unit the teacher models, provides support, monitors and evaluates progress, and examines students' products and performance. Moreover, through a range of complex texts, materials and rubrics, all students are provided with multiple opportunities to engage with texts that are appropriately scaffolded.</p> <p>Focuses on Challenging Sections of the Text: Through planning, assessing sources, notating, discussing, reading writing, speaking and listening and more, the unit offers students many exemplary opportunities to build toward independence.</p> <p>Integrates Supports: The unit does not provide enough supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.</p> <p>Provides Extensions: On page 11 of the Repository the unit provides titles of additional literary texts such as Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 or McKibbon's The Age of Missing Information. Additionally more resources are listed on page 22.</p> <p>Progression: On page 2 of the Framework it states, "There are skills, methods, and habits of mind that we can develop to lead us deeper into the experiences accessed in that medium. These skills involve being open to new knowledge, asking questions and finding better and new answers. They involve listening to those around us, building on what they know and have experienced, and incorporating that knowledge into our own exploration. They also involve making connections and organizing what we find, then returning to and refining those questions. As we explore, we also develop our ability to explain what we've come to think and show why we think it."</p> <p>Gradually Remove Supports: Throughout the unit, one is reminded of the recursive nature of the process. The ability to revisit, review and reflect as the student builds toward independence.</p> <p>Provide for Authentic Learning: Each part of the unit provides for authentic learning: Part 1: Initiating Inquiry, Part 2: Gathering Information, Part 3: Deepening Understanding, Part 4: Finalizing Inquiry and Part 5: Developing and Communicating an Evidence-Based Perspective.</p> <p>Independent Reading: Page 11 of the framework states that the purpose of the unit is "1) to develop skills and habits used in conducting independent research to deepen understanding." Each of the 5 parts promotes independent reading to build stamina, confidence, and motivation. Moreover, it indicates through the Research Portfolio, and other on-going assessments, how students are accountable for that reading.</p> <p>Technology: All of the texts have been located through Internet searches. Students are encouraged to use technology whenever called for. However, allowances have been made for pencil and paper responses for those students unskilled.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension IV – Assessment

<p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. 	<p>Assessment - At the end of each of the 5 parts, the unit includes suggestions for assessing student progress. It lists the products the students will have produced and provides a Research Criteria Matrix to evaluate the products. Additionally, the Teacher Research Unit Guide provides specific information on the entire process and expected student material to be produced and evaluated. Moreover, rubrics are provided to accompany the areas of focus.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Summary Comments

This is an exemplary unit.

Suggestions for Improvement:

Some guidance for teachers to cite the specific strand and language of the standard at their grade level

Provide more opportunities to access the material for ELL and Special Education students.

*NOTE - Page 20, Activity #5, correct the spelling of the word "Conducting" (presently spelled "Conucting")

Reviewer 3

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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). <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 	<p>Targets CCSS ELA standards:</p> <p>The unit targets a variety of CCSS ELA standards, detailed on page 6 of the Research Framework. The writing, reading, and speaking and listening standards listed are the anchor standards for 7th through 12th grade: W.2, W.4, W.5, W.7, W.8, W.9, SL.1, R.1, R.2, R.6, R.9. RI.10 for grades 6 - 12 is also targeted. The explanation of how each standards is addressed is helpful to explain how the standards are targeted in an integrated form that is aligned with the both the spirit and letter of the CCSS.</p> <p>Purpose for Instruction</p> <p>The purpose for instruction can be found on page 6 of the Research Framework as, "The instructional focus of this unit is on building student proficiency in a process for conducting research: developing and refining inquiry questions; finding assessing, analyzing, and synthesizing multiple sources to answer those questions; and organizing and using evidence from those sources to explain understanding in ways that avoid plagiarism". The Research Topic Repository has a stated purpose on page 2 as, "A Research Topic Repository provides a starting point and a set of common source texts for a given topical arena in which student inquiry and research might take place" and goes on to detail the topic of Technology on page 3. Both the</p>
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<p>texts.</p>	<p>Research Framework and Topic Repository may benefit from a short description of instructional purpose at the top of each front matter so that the purpose for instruction is easily found and clearly understood.</p> <p>Text Selection The texts selected within the Topic Repository have Lexile measurements that range from below to above grade band complexity appropriate for 9th and 10th grade students (from 840L - 1420L), range in type and purpose from poetry to academic critiques, and are all sourced online. This range and sourcing is appropriate to the research purpose and technology focus of the unit.</p> <p>Integrates Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening Throughout the unit students use and deepen reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills to build on both their research skills and content knowledge. As the Research Framework states on page 3, "While each part of the unit introduces skills associated with the various steps in the research process, it should be understood that the process itself is recursive and that these steps will be repeated and integrated as students conduct inquiry".</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media). ✓ Writing from Sources: Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays). ✓ Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. 	<p>Reading Text Closely Close Reading of a variety of texts is supported throughout this unit as students carefully read a variety of texts to determine text type, purpose, reliability, etc. Additionally, the Topic Repository provides descriptions of texts and their instructional implications on pages 8 - 9, including a close reading of texts 4, 5, and 6.</p> <p>Text-Based Evidence: Student use of evidence to support discussing and writing about text is facilitated through the sample text-dependent questions that accompany each 'Text Notes' section in the Topic Repository, the 'Text Centered Discussion' checklist used throughout the unit, and activities using the 'Forming Evidence-Based Claims' handout.</p> <p>Writing From Sources: Students are routinely expected write from sources in a variety of contexts and use resource handouts to do so; using 'Taking Notes' and 'Potential Sources' handouts to detail research texts, writing to refining inquiry with the 'Exploring a Topic' and 'Research Frame' handouts, and finally presenting their research with the 'Evidence-Based Perspective' handout. Each of these activities and handouts does a good job of integrating resources or information from other lessons and resources within the unit so that students' writing skills are built in an integrated and authentic way.</p> <p>Academic Vocabulary The front matter of the unit states that academic and disciplinary vocabulary will be taught throughout the unit, and one specific strategy is described throughout the body of the unit (page 23) or topic repository. The unit would be greatly strengthened by include specific strategies for vocabulary instruction during a variety of activities and with multiple texts.</p> <p>Increasing Text Complexity: The texts provided in the Topic Repository increase in complexity throughout the unit and students are increasingly required to work independently with</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 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. 	<p>text throughout the unit. Additionally, guidance has been provided to the using teacher detailing the scope, use of, and range of texts to include in a teacher-created text set.</p> <p>Building Disciplinary Knowledge: Using the text set in the 'Topic Repository: Technology' would deepen students' content knowledge of the use and types of technology, the discourse within the field, as well as the context in which information is presented within the discipline.</p> <p>Balance of Texts: While there is not a balance of literary and informational texts in this unit, the nature of the unit results in the lack of literary texts. While including literature may not strengthen this unit, it could be noted that lacking inclusion of literary texts in this unit means that literature should be included in later or previous units.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: Students are consistently expected to produce a balance of on-demand and process writing that reflect their understanding of research texts ('Writing from Sources' section above details supports for this variety).</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. ✓ Provides <i>all</i> 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 grade level text band. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). 	<p>Cultivates Student Interest The inquiry focus of this unit combined with supports provided and contemporary topic of technology will likely result a high level of student engagement around reading, speaking, and writing about texts.</p> <p>Addresses Instructional Expectations The front matter and activity details within the Research Framework and the annotated text set clearly explain the purpose for and expectations around instruction for the unit. There are many handouts throughout this unit (14 altogether), and the unit may be easier to use for a practicing teacher and more aligned with college and career expectations if the total number of handouts could be reduced (using teachers may not be able to produce so many handouts for all their students and colleges and careers expect more independence).</p> <p>Focuses on Challenging Text(s) Challenging sections of various texts are focused on through the use of text-dependent questions for each text (models of which are provided for using teachers in the 'Text Notes' section of the Topic Repository).</p> <p>Integrates Appropriate Supports The numerous handouts, instructional activities, teacher modeling, teacher feedback, whole class discussion, and peer review are all excellent supports for struggling students. The unit may be improved with targeted suggestions for how to deepen the existing supports or alternative instructional activities for struggling learners.</p> <p>Provides Extensions Extension readings are provided for students, though no activity suggestions accompany these suggestions. As appropriate for a variety of students, teachers may choose to differentiate the production of final products listed on page 42 of the Research Framework.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. 	<p>Progression of Learning Through a variety of modeling, group work, feedback, and independent practice, students deepen their research skills and knowledge around technology as the unit progresses.</p> <p>Gradual Release At the start of the unit there is a great deal of teacher modeling and feedback and as the unit progresses students are increasingly reliant on colleagues for feedback and are working more independently.</p> <p>Authentic Learning Students engage in authentic application of literacy and inquiry skills as they create their own paths for inquiry, select and analyze resources, engage in peer review of research, and write to both refine and articulate their evidence-based arguments.</p> <p>Independent Reading There are no opportunities for independent reading provided for in this unit, though it is not clear that such reading is appropriate within the context of this unit. However, the unit might be more aligned with the spirit of CCSS ELA if it was suggested that if teachers do not engage students in independent reading in this unit they should do so in later units.</p> <p>Use of Technology The very research topic of technology as well as the online and editable PDF use of technology to review, search for, select, and analyze resources throughout the unit are an appropriate use of technology.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension IV – Assessment

<p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. 	<p>Elicits Evidence Throughout the unit, students are engaging in processes that produce observable evidence of students' independence with complex text. 'Assessment Opportunities' are suggested at the conclusion of each unit Part within the 'Research Framework' unit, and the variety of student use handouts (taking notes, checklists, process and product writing) each can be reviewed by teachers to both discover student proficiency and provide students with feedback</p> <p>Assessment Methods are Unbiased All assessment methods are accessible to all students in either written or electronic format and the clarity of expectations allows these methods to be unbiased for all students.</p> <p>Rubrics and Guidelines The unit provides guidelines in the form of process and activity checklists as well as annotated versions of students' handouts to guide teacher practice. The student checklists may benefit from the addition of a section for evidence so that evaluating students must not only indicate that an item was done, but provide details as a basis for that feedback. Additionally, the final writing activity would be greatly enhanced if it was accompanied by either such a checklist guideline or a writing rubric to provide clear assessment expectations to teachers and students.</p> <p>Varied Modes of Assessment The majority of assessments in this unit are formative and self-assessment</p>
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measures, as teachers and peers provide students with direct feedback on their progress. Summative assessment in the form a final writing assignment is present. Pre-assessment measures are absent, and the unit may benefit from their inclusion (perhaps an opening activity that provides teachers with feedback on how proficient their students already are with research).

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

Summary Comments

The overall rating for this unit is E: Exemplar (total 12).

This unit is an excellent draft and needs a bit of improvement to become an exemplar. These improvements include:

Purpose for Instruction - Both the Research Framework and Topic Repository may benefit from a short description of instructional purpose at the top of each front matter so that the purpose for instruction is easily found and clearly understood.

Academic Vocabulary

The front matter of the unit states that academic and disciplinary vocabulary will be taught throughout the unit, though only one specific strategy is described throughout the body of the unit (page 23) or topic repository. The unit would be greatly strengthened by include specific strategies for vocabulary instruction during a variety of activities and with multiple texts.

Addresses Instructional Expectations

There are many handouts throughout this unit (14 altogether), and the unit may be easier to use for a practicing teacher and more aligned with college and career expectations if the total number of handouts could be reduced (using teachers may not be able to produce so many handouts for all their students and colleges and careers expect more independence).

Integrates Appropriate Supports

The unit may be improved with targeted suggestions for how to deepen the existing supports or alternative instructional activities for struggling learners.

Rubrics and Guidelines

The student checklists may benefit from the addition of a section for evidence so that evaluating students must not only indicated that an item was done, but provide details as a basis for that feedback. Additionally, the final writing activity would be greatly enhanced if it was accompanied by either such a checklist guideline or a writing rubric to provide clear assessment expectations to teachers and students.

Reviewer 4

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

Targeted Standards:

W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
 W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
 W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Purpose: The unit has an open-ended purpose that is stated on page 4 of the

<p>advancing literacy skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (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.</p>	<p>Research Framework. "The unit outlines, develops and supports a research process that students can use an evidence-based perspective and Research Portfolio they develop in the unit for a wide range of purposes, ranging from thesis-driven academic paper or presentation, to a design plan for constructing a house or industrial menu, to informing personal or community decision making."</p> <p>Each lesson within the unit is aligned with the common core standards and provides a clear and explicit purpose.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media). ✓ Writing from Sources: Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays). ✓ Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. <input type="checkbox"/> 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. 	<p>Balance of Text: An annotated list of text types commonly used during the research project is included. The unit scaffolds text selections based upon student and teacher choice. However, the unit could provide a more comprehensive balance with the inclusion of literary texts.</p> <p>Close Reading / Building Knowledge: The design of the Inquiry Path is to promote critical thinking and investigation using an evidence-based perspective.</p> <p>Academic Vocabulary: A variety of strategies are utilized to teach academic vocabulary, specifically direct instruction. Page 5: "By the end of the unit students will have developed a deep conceptual knowledge of key vocabulary that they can transfer to a variety of academic and public contexts... activities analyze the way authors use language and key words to develop ideas and achieve specific purposes."</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. ✓ Provides <i>all</i> 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 grade level text band. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection. <input type="checkbox"/> 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 (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. 	<p>All Learners: Topic Repositories accompany the unit for instructional models of topic introduction and inquiry processes to engage students. Additional materials are provided in an online database for teacher and student access. Tools are provided to aid students thinking and, habits, analysis, and researched information and annotated tools provide additional supports for teacher instruction.</p> <p>Progression / Student Supports: The unit is structured for instruction in the process of conducting research in a sequenced series of activities. Supports are built-in to scaffold student learning and are recursive, in that the students will repeat the steps throughout the inquiry process.</p> <p>Independent Reading: Student choice is built in to the research process by allowing students to select topics based on interest.</p> <p>Technology: The unit is a Compressed File organized into three folders: Research Unit Framework, Tools and Handouts, Topic Resource Repositories. All files are read and write, editable PDF Forms. Teachers have the option to work with paper and pencil or to work virtually.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension IV – Assessment

<p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree 	<p>Assessment opportunities are embedded throughout the unit. With the culmination of each Part, suggestion for assessment opportunities is provided with explicit and clearly defined criteria for assessing student</p>
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<p>to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. 	<p>learning. Additionally, a Research Criteria Matrix "articulates the key proficiencies and habits of the research process the students need to build". The Matrix breaks up the skills into categories, articulating the various criteria within each by which to evaluate student performance.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Summary Comments

The Researching to Deepen Understanding unit is a thorough and versatile product for teaching the research cycle. The annotated list of text types is an inventive, well-designed tool to assist teachers and students in the selection of text material for the process.

Providing the purpose of the text is an excellent way to scaffold both the student and the teacher's understanding of the cycle presented in the unit.

Suggestion: If printing hard copies, the materials can become cumbersome due to the large volume of resources. A label system or footnote at the bottom of each tool would provide guidance for teachers and student unfamiliar with the design specific to this unit. A "quick reference" page providing a condensed overview of the entire cycle would be helpful for teachers, something similar to the Student Research Plan with page numbers/labels to quickly locate the tool or handout. Organization of the entire unit, once printed, needs to be addressed.

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.