

“Vision of Success” Case Study: Supporting All Students in Accessing Grade-Level Texts

The 6th grade ELA team is planning to begin their first unit and anchor text, *Inside Out and Back Again*. *Inside Out and Back Again*, by Thannha Lai, is a narrative poetry novel that tells the story of Kim Hà, a young girl who must flee Vietnam with her family due to the war.

Ms. Rodriguez and her co-teacher, Mr. Johnson, read all the unit texts and review the end-of-unit task. During their vertical team planning to address missed learning, they realize that students missed the final 5th grade unit, based around the anchor text *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse. This means that students have not yet been introduced to a novel written in a narrative poetry format. Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Johnson continue to reflect on what aspects of the anchor text create significant challenges that stand in the way of student comprehension. They determine that in order for students to fully understand *Inside Out and Back Again*, they must support students in accessing the **structure** and **knowledge demands** of the anchor text. The co-teaching team returns to their unit plan and sees that there are two days built into the end of the unit for flex time and reteaching. They decide to use those two flex days to address these challenging parts of the text at the beginning of the unit.

Ms. Rodriguez plans a lesson on the Vietnam War where students build their **knowledge** and are introduced to key vocabulary in preparation for engaging with the anchor text. She includes a short supplemental text and relevant pictures, and chooses critical vocabulary words that students will engage with throughout the unit. Students complete an exit ticket using the resources from class to describe the impact of fleeing from the war on the Vietnamese refugees. Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Johnson determine that they will review students’ responses before class the next day to check for understanding and plan immediate next steps.

Ms. Rodriguez then plans to support students in understanding the **structure** of this novel, knowing they missed a similarly structured novel during school closures in the spring. She carves out time at the beginning of class for students to examine the format of their new anchor text, *Inside Out and Back Again*. Ms. Rodriguez finds a recording and transcript of author Thannha Lai for students to listen to. In this recording, Lai models the reading of one of the poems aloud and explains how they should be read like a story. She also provides some insight into her own experience as a refugee in the Vietnam War. After listening, Ms. Rodriguez plans for the students to use the transcript to answer text dependent questions about Lai’s choice to write the story in verse instead of prose, and about her experience as a refugee in America. During work time, Mr. Johnson plans to pull a small group of students who showed limited understanding of important content in yesterday’s lesson based on their exit slip data. He plans to refocus students on two paragraphs of the text and asks follow up text dependent questions to ensure that students no longer have misconceptions. Finally, he plans to direct students to revisit their exit ticket responses and revise to include evidence from those two paragraphs.