**Background:**

My students are in the midst of an informational writing unit, originally modeled closely after Lucy Calkin’s Writers Workshop curriculum. I originally really liked this approach because of the freedom students had with their writing, which gives them more ownership and confidence about their work. However I found that my students were not ready yet to be as independent as she suggests, so we recently took a step back and students used graphic organizers to help plan and support writing an informational text about an animal.

Originally students were picking any topic they wanted and writing an informational text (as much as they know) across multiple pages. I then introduced adding a heading, but this is where students began to get confused about what a heading was, and how this helped to organize ideas by page. Because the class was struggling with organization and writing everything they knew about one topic I then asked them to pick an animal they were familiar with and use a graphic organizer to answer 4 questions- what do they look like, what do they eat, what do they do, and where do they live. Overall this really helped students focus on a topic of interest and think about everything they knew in regards to these four areas. This support also allowed them to work better independently.

**Focus of the Lesson:**

This lesson will focus on taking the graphic organizer and transferring it back to the writing paper. I will model this by using what we wrote last week on penguins with a graphic organizer, and transferring it to paper. I will also model how I add more details to make sure I am really putting everything I know into this writing. I want my students to understand the purpose of the graphic organizer and how we can use this to help us organize our writing. I will also re-explain how to add a heading, and what it should say.

When students go back to their seats many will need to finish up their graphic organizers. I will encourage doing that first, before they begin transferring. When they are ready they will take their organizer and begin writing each box on a separate page. During this time I will walk around and conference with students to help them expand their ideas.

While this is a whole group lesson some students will work in a smaller group with my mentor teacher, Mrs. Lloyd. These are students who have a hard time working independently and need that constant support. There are also a few students who will begin by drawing, before using the graphic organizer.

**Learning Centered Goals:**

* Students will be able to answer all four questions about their animal through writing
* Students will be able to use the graphic organizer to help them write their informational text or similarly, students will be able to implement what they learned in the mini-lesson
* Students will be able to work independently and continuously throughout the writing period

**Practice Centered Goals:**

* I will be able to clearly explain and model how to use a graphic organizer to help write an informational text
* I will provide enough scaffolds so all of my students can access the lesson
* I will conference with multiple students and check in to help them expand their writing
* I will maintain a calm and safe learning environment for my students

**Round Learning-Centered Inquiry:**

Did you think the graphic organizers helped students organize their information and ease the burden of writing independently? Were most students able to write independently for the majority of the time, without constant support?

Were students writing everything they knew about a topic? Were they choosing topics that they could write a lot about?

**Round Practice-Centered Inquiry:**

Do you think my modeling and explanation was clear, and were students following it? Could they implement what they learned in the mini lesson in their own writing (could they correctly transfer their writing)?

Do you think my conferencing during the writing time was effective?