

# Make the connection



This Information Literacy lesson addresses the following skills from AASL's Standards for the 21st Century Learner [www.ala.org/aasl/standards](http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards): 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.2.4, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.6, 3.2.1, 3.2.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5.

ATTENTION:  Librarian Teachers:  Science  Math  English  Technology

## Curriculum Connection

Science – Animals

Language Arts – Biographies

### COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT CHART

#### POTENTIAL END PRODUCT

1. Book
2. News report
3. One-act play

#### DESCRIPTION OF END PRODUCT

- Bound volume of children's work
- Recorded informational broadcast
- Informational performance

#### POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

- Parents
- Everyone
- Students

## Researching with Emergent Readers and Writers Show What You Know!

Those of us who do library research with young students know that creativity is required when asking children to demonstrate what they have learned.

Technology guru, author, and education advocate David Warlick urges us to teach children to “express ideas compellingly.” But when you’re working with emergent-level readers researching topics of their interest, how can you enable them to show what they’ve learned compellingly? With limited writing skills, finding ways for them to express and share their new-found knowledge demands us to call on our resources.

Colleen MacDonell, author of *Project-Based Inquiry Units for Young Children: First Steps to Research for Grades Pre-K-2*, suggests encouraging young students to express their knowledge through creative “potential end products”—familiar project forms in which they are eager to participate. Further, she recommends using a comprehensive chart to communicate the use of such projects to students; this allows them to better understand the intended results of their research and provides them with structured goals. See the sidebar to the left for three examples of potential end product projects for emergent researchers.

### The Lesson: Show What You Know

- A. In pairs, ask students to choose a high-interest, nonfiction book of their interest from your preselected assortment.
- B. Instruct them to use paired reading to read the book to one another.
- C. Invite students to find and record three important and interesting facts from their selected title.
- D. Ask them to select a potential end product from the chart to the left (or your own preferred projects) that they'd like to use to communicate what they've learned. Require your students to include the facts they recorded from their reading in their end product.

### End Product Projects

**1. Book:** After reading *Painted Lady Butterflies* by Martha Rustad, a pair of students can communicate what they have learned by contributing a chapter to their year-long classroom book. Students describe their three facts and add illustrations that describe their knowledge visually. (Tip: make available the title *Show Me a Story: Writing Your Own Picture Book* to help students understand how picture books are made, or introduce them to graphic novel formatting as shown at the intro to *T-Ball Trouble* from the My First Graphic Novel series.) After sharing their page with the class, ask students to add their chapter to the classroom's continuing book. You can reproduce this book as an end-of-the-year takeaway for kids to share with their parents.

**2. News Report:** Other pairs may choose *President Obama* by Jennifer Marks and produce an interview-style news report. Ask each pair of students to prepare a series of questions and answers that will allow them to communicate their three facts. Then, instruct one student to act as an interviewer and the other as a topic expert. If the equipment is available, have students conduct their interview at a computer station equipped with a microphone and audio-capturing software so that they can record their news report. The recorded clip can be uploaded to your school or library website as a podcast for students and parents to enjoy.

**3. One-Act Play:** Another set of students may choose to demonstrate their knowledge through writing and performing a one-act play after reading *Fire Trucks in Action* by Mari Schuh. To show students how plays are written, allow them to peruse age- and reading-level-appropriate Reader's Theater Kits. After they've written their three-facts-based script, allow them to use arts-and-crafts supplies to construct their costumes. Then, have them stage their play at presentation time.

Allowing students to choose the topic of their research as well as their preferred end product motivates, engages, and gives children ownership of their learning. Combining research-based learning strategies with high-interest reading materials and project choices makes for lessons that improve student understanding and learning success.

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For more ideas on project-based inquiry units for emergent readers see *Thematic Inquiry through Fiction and Nonfiction – PreK to Grade 6* by Colleen MacDonell, available through Linworth Publishing. For more ways to express ideas compellingly, see *Redefining Literacy 2.0, 2nd Edition* by David F. Warlick.