



The Conservatory School
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Zoomania!

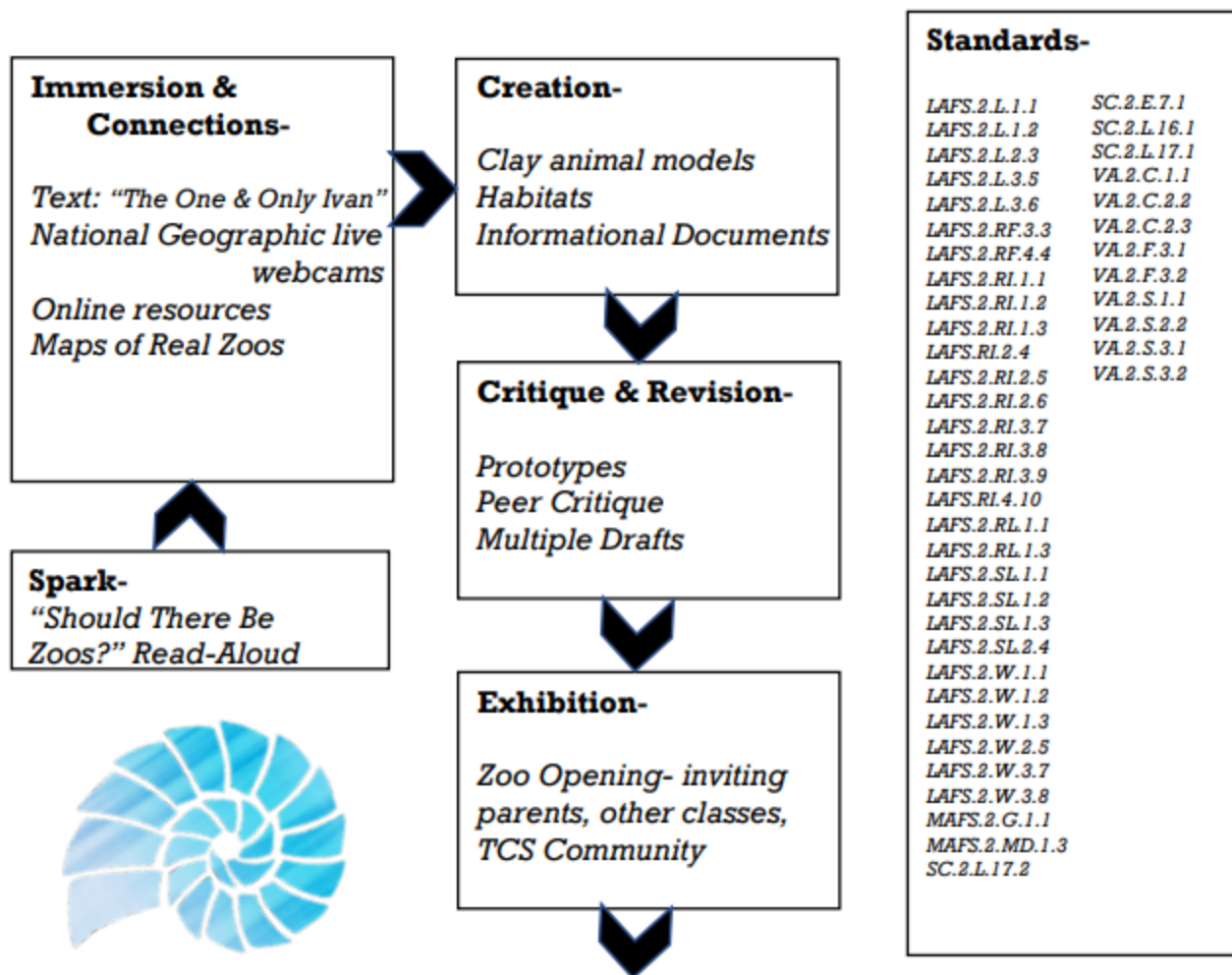
A second grade inquiry project
Kimberly Hammaker, TCS



The Big Picture.....

Sparked unexpectedly by a read-aloud of "Should There Be Zoos?," written and published by a fourth grade class, Mrs. Hammaker's students found themselves passionately conflicted over their own beliefs about zoos. Further research and debate unfolded fueled by raw collective curiosity, and these students slowly became experts in humane zoo habitat design. After determining that they could not buy their own real zoo to re-design, the class set out to create a model Zoo with the goal of inviting other students and classes to tour and learn about the safest and healthiest ways to keep animals in captivity. Through a design process of drafting and revision, each student created life-like clay models of a specific animal, then used found objects and loose parts to build innovative habitats that would meet that species' specific physical and biological needs. When their model zoo opened in the TCS Media Lab, student "zookeepers" knowledgeably presented their designs to a large crowd of diverse ages. These second grade animal activists and their zoo visitors walked away from this two-month study with a passionate new perspective on the contemporary real-world debate surrounding animals in captivity.

The Process.....



Reflections.....

"This project had a truly **authentic** start which was so exciting! There was so much **growth** in student **mindsets**, particularly in persistence, and collaboration. **Student voice** was strong as they chose different aspects of their animal and habitat to focus on, their creativity really blew me away. If I were to change any aspect of the project, it would be to **strengthen our connections** with outside organizations, for example to partner with an actual zoo and lean on their expertise beyond our own research. I'm proud that the project truly captured **every type of learner** in my classroom"

----- Kimberly Hammaker, teacher

"I've never worked on something so hard my whole life!"

----- Second grade student