Co-taught lesson planning documentation and reflection

My media specialist supervisor encouraged me to co-teach with a first year teacher. She put me in touch with Erin Bauer, a first year 3rd grade teacher. Before I met with her, I sent her a copy of the initial planning document and the final lesson plan document and told her a little about the assignment. We met together on Monday, February 13th to discuss what we could co-teach together. She said she was in charge of the math and reading/writing curriculum sequencing guide for 3rd grade, so since she had those sequencing guides readily available, I told her I felt most comfortable with reading. We looked at the reading sequencing guide together for the cycle that started in March and went through April. I ran copies of those pages and more closely examined the teaching standards to be covered during that time. The standard about teaching opinion writing or interpreting graphs/charts/and maps seemed most interesting to me. She was willing to do a lesson about anything, even if it was standards they’d already covered in class.

I was thinking for either of these two standards students would need to access some kind of nonfiction text to work from. After examining a lot of the media specialists’ magazines and looking through eBooks and digital resources on the school’s webpage, I didn’t really see a lot of texts that had charts and graphs incorporated, so I decided to focus on the other standard about opinion writing. I knew magazines like *Time for Kids* or *Scholastic News* had opinion articles in them, but we didn’t have access to those either. Finally I had a lightbulb moment and remembered the *Who Would Win?* book series, which compares attributes of two similar animals to determine which one would hypothetically win in a fight. I decided those books would be a great example of nonfiction opinion writing. Students could work in pairs to do their own research about two different animals and then somehow digitally display who they thought would win based on their research. I also knew there are a couple kid friendly databases (digital encyclopedias) from the school library and public library resources that the kids could use to find information about their animal using one or two sources.

I spoke with the media specialist about digital tools to use for creating a graphic organizer. We looked through the best apps for 2016 list together. After considering a few, she recommended Popplet and told me that she could install all these apps on all the class sets of ipads since she had money left over from her library grant to purchase these app. After we had those details finalized, I went ahead and emailed the tentative lesson outline to Erin Bauer in a Google Doc, encouraging her to make changes and offer suggestions as needed. She emailed back with a couple small suggestions, which I agreed to. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zngYyc98mON_r9B8Jtj7TmnB0j0w5UvdGct4IuSmLNE/edit?usp=sharing>

Then on Thursday, March 2nd, I emailed a second Google Doc that detailed a list of animal pairs the kids could work with and a graphic organizer they could use to do their research. <https://docs.google.com/a/uncg.edu/document/d/1mraTISdkSb8iw-dmkTCRTH7eb7Qf_B25WkjpggcUo5Q/edit?usp=sharing>

On Monday, March 6th, she emailed back addressing some of my concerns. We agreed that matching kids in pairs based on their skill level would be a good way to help them research most effectively. We also thought that we could extend the lesson to two days so that the kids would not be rushed and we’re pretty sure that will work with the media specialist.

Overall, I think Erin Bauer has been very easy to collaborate with. It’s unfortunate that Cornelius Elementary is on a fixed schedule as the media specialist’s planning period never aligns with this teacher’s planning period, which is why the media specialist never collaborates or co-teaches with any teachers. However, we have been able to make the communication work using emails and Google Doc comments. My biggest concern is knowing how long the project will take to be able to budget the time correctly for the kids.