Parent Education Lesson Plan  
for  
Zack’s Alligator by Shirley Mozelle

**Name of Activities:** Using Nonfiction Texts with fictional picture books  
**Students Participating: size of group:** Individual parents or parents in a large group

**Lesson Goal:** Parents will learn how to pair a picture book with a non-fiction text and encourage their child to identify facts in a story.

**Learning Objectives/Skills:** The learners will be able to:

a) Understand the importance of exposing their children to multiple genres of texts  
b) Acquire facts about alligators in order to extend their child’s knowledge  
c) Apply techniques that incorporate nonfiction texts with fiction texts

**Environmental Adaptations, Time and Materials Needed:** These activities can be adapted to many different situations but chairs/desks in a circle would be ideal. The activities will take approximately **20-25 minutes**, depending on students. The following materials will be needed:

- Copies of *Zack’s Alligator* by Shirley Mozelle (one for each family)
- Copies of *Waiting Alligators* by William Munoz (one for each family if possible) or have a variety of elementary nonfiction books on alligators (see “Suggested Titles”)
- “Alligator Fact Coloring Book” (one copy for each family)
- Pencils and paper
- Stapler/staples
- Scissors

**Procedure/Description of the Activity**

1. Instructors should begin the lesson with a brief discussion about genres of texts. Explain to parents that it is important to expose children to multiple types of books, including fictional and nonfictional texts. Make sure parents understand the difference between the terms “fiction” and “nonfiction” (fictional books are imaginative stories that are not true or did not occur in real life, whereas nonfictional books represent accurate facts or events).

2. Explain to parents that children’s fiction provides excellent opportunities to introduce children to nonfiction books that include real facts. By using their child’s favorite story books with other nonfiction texts, parents can increase their child’s motivation to learn.

3. Introduce the book *Zack’s Alligator* by Shirley Mozelle. This is an example of a fictional storybook that makes some connections to real alligator facts. Ask parents to listen to you as you read the story. They should think about how the story incorporates a few alligator facts and areas in the text where these facts could be elaborated on. Instructors should model interactive reading techniques by asking questions, prompting listeners for predictions and making connections between the illustrations and text. This will provide parents with an example of how to read interactively with their own children.
4. After reading the story, discuss parents’ responses. Possible answers may be that the book touches on facts about alligator’s diets, habitats or behavior. Also, ask parents for some examples of Bridget’s behavior that young children may recognize as different from real alligators (i.e. riding merry-go-rounds, watching TV, etc.).

5. Next, distribute copies of the book, *Waiting Alligators* by William Munoz to parents (if not enough copies are available, use a variety of nonfiction books on alligators from the “Suggested Titles” list). Have parents read and discuss the book in small groups or pairs. Have parents identify strengths of this nonfiction text for young readers (i.e. large real-life photos, larger print, limited amount of text on each page).

6. After reading and discussing nonfiction texts, have parents read *Zack’s Alligator* in pairs. Have parents role-play how to read the story and point out alligator facts in the text. Also, have parents practice extending some of the facts in the story with information they have learned from the *Waiting Alligators* book.

7. Encourage parents to read both *Zack’s Alligator* and *Waiting Alligators* with their children at home. After reading both books, parents can discuss with their child differences and similarities between real alligators and the character, Bridget, in the story.

8. Distribute copies of the Alligator Fact Coloring Book to each family. Model how to easily assemble the book by cutting each page in half and stapling them together on the side. Parents should encourage their child to color and draw on the pages. Families can also read the short book of facts together at home.

**Assessment:**

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Participants’ Names</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Understand importance of multiple genres of texts</td>
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<td>b) Acquire facts about alligators to extend their child’s knowledge</td>
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<td>c) Apply techniques to incorporate nonfiction with fictional texts</td>
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**Reflect on the Activity:**
1. What worked well?

2. What didn’t work?

3. What might have made the activity more successful?

4. Did you notice any potential for follow-up activities based on what the students said or did?

**Transfer Home/Extension Ideas:** Encourage parents to try out the techniques at home with their children as they read *Zack’s Alligator* and to report back on their success. Also, encourage parents to incorporate nonfiction books with other storybooks that their children enjoy listening to.

**Suggested Nonfiction Titles on Alligators**
- *Waiting Alligators* by William Munoz
- *Snap! A Book About Alligators and Crocodiles* by Melvin and Gilda Berger
- *All About Alligators* by Jim Arnosky
- *Alligators* by Frank Staub

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* from National Center for Family Literacy’s *Building Strong Readers* and *Learning to Read and Write*