**Mentor Text/Author – Knots on a Counting Rope** by Bill Martin Jr. and John Alexander

**Synopsis:** Boy-Strength –of-Blue- Horses and his grandfather reminisce about the young boy’s birth, his first horse, and an exciting horse race. Through the power of retelling the boy’s life stories, he gains confidence, courage, and the inner strength to face his greatest challenge – his blindness. This intergenerational, poetic tale unfolds naturally and eloquently, exhibiting the love between a boy and his grandfather.

**Focus Skills:**

* Sequence of Events
* Central Idea
* Inferential Reasoning
* Figurative Language
* Vocabulary

**Big Ideas/Key Understanding/Focusing Question**

**How does Boy-Strength-of- Blue- Horses gain confidence to face life’s challenges? Through the power of story telling the boy is reminded of the events that have provided him with inner strength and courage. (Sequence the Events)**

**What is this story trying to teach us? How does the author help the reader connect to the lesson being taught?**

**As the teacher reads the story, students must focus on MEANING/PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, and LANGUAGE**

***Questions to Ponder* as you read the text:**

*What do you notice about the words on the page? How does that help you know who is talking*

*What words and phrases does the author use to describe the wind?*

**Introduce Vocabulary –** Discuss with the students words that ar concrete and easy to explain (describes events/processes/ideas /concepts/experiences that are familiar) versus more abstract concepts (multiple meanings, unfamiliar words, needs additional explanation and connective ideas).

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| Page 2 – Hogan  Page 2 – wounded  Page 3 – whipping  Page 4 -frail  Page 4 – howling  Page 5 - shallow  Page 5 – galloping | Page 8 - Naming Ceremony  Page 8 - crossed  Page 11 – foal  Page 12 – reins  Page 12 - traced  Page 12 – steep  Page 13 – tribal  Page 14 – courage |

**Figurative Language**

Begin a chart capturing examples of personification and similes

* “the storm was crying my name”
* “the storm came out of the mountains crying “Boy-eee!”
* “wounded wind”
* “whipping up sand as sharp as claws”
* “crying like a bobcat”
* “the wind stopped howling:
* “night became as quiet as soft falling snow”

**Sequence of Events**

“Then what happened, Grandfather?” The Boy asks the grandfather to tell him “who I am,” in essence the night he was born and how he has grown and overcome obstacles.

How does the author sequentially present the Boy’s life events?

**Inferential Reasoning**

“Dark mountains…”

What textual evidence is provided that allows us to infer that Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses was born blind?

Why does the author choose not to provide the reader with that information in the beginning?

Chart text that supports the readers understanding that the boy is blind.

Examples

* “No, you were not strong.  
  You were sick and frail.  
  We thought you would die.”
* “Dark mountains are always around us”
* “You were born with a dark curtain in front of your eyes”
* “I see the horses with my hands,   
  Grandfather”
* “Yes, I can feel the morning.”

**Central Idea  
*Question Prompt***: How does Boy-With-Strength-of–Blue-Horses gain confidence to face life’s challenges? What can we learn from this story?