I chose the strand “Living Deliberately” for my curriculum project. I teach second graders in a small rural elementary school in southern Vermont. Being mindful and living mindfully is a large part of our second grade experience, and living mindfully and living deliberately seem to me to be similar. To be mindful and to live mindfully you need to slow down and pay attention. I find when I slow down and pay attention I notice what choices lead to happiness and which choices lead to suffering. In the same way Thoreau finds that when he slows down and pays attention he can make deliberate choices about how to live that lead to happiness. It is my hope that I can teach students to slow down and pay attention to what their heart is telling them, and in doing so make choices in their lives that lead to greater happiness.

Day 1 lesson 1

Objective for the Unit: Students will be able to summarize Henry Hikes To Fitchburg and identify the message of the story through a verbal retell. The will use the sentence starter, The message of Henry Hikes to Fitchburg is …

Teacher: (I will start the lesson by posting a picture of Henry David Thoreau and introduce him to the class.) Henry David Thoreau was born on July 12 1817. That is over 200 year ago. He died on May 6th 1862 when he was only 45 years old. Henry David Thoreau loved nature, he loved his friends, he loved reading and thinking about things, he was a naturalist (that means he studies nature) and he cared very much about how people live. Henry David Thoreau did not live a long time, but in his life he made a big impression, and people today still read his books and talk about his ideas. We are going to learn about Henry David Thoreau and his ideas by reading this picture book, Henry Hikes to Fitchburg, by D.B. Johnson. Let’s take 30 second to look at the cover of this book and when you have 3 things you noticed and can share with a partner put your thumb up. (wait until all thumbs are up)

Teacher: Great, it looks like we noticed a lot about the cover, now I want you to look, lean, and whisper, the 3 things you noticed to your partner. (While students are sharing what they noticed teacher will circulate and listen to ideas being shared. After it seems as though students are done sharing ideas call the groups attention back for a group share. Students may notice that the
character on the cover is a bear. The title has the same first name as Henry David Thoreau. The bear on the cover has a walking stick and is walking on a road. The bear seems happy on the cover. There are farms and mountains in the background.)

**Teacher:** Many of you noticed that the character on the cover is a bear. The bear looks happy. The title has the same first name as Henry David Thoreau. Some of you said that maybe the bear is Henry David Thoreau. Many of you noticed that the bear is waking or hiking and that the title tells us where he many be going. We are going to read this book over the course of 3 days, and when we finish you will be able to tell a friend the message of Henry Hikes to Fitchburg is….

Today we saw a picture of the real Henry David Thoreau, we have seen his picture and we learned that he lived a long time ago. D.B Johnson wrote this book, and instead of drawing the person Henry David Thoreau he drew a bear to represent Henry David Thoreau. Get ready to look, lean and whisper to a parter. Here is your talking point, why do you think D.B Johnson used a bear to represent Henry David Thoreau and not the person Henry David Thoreau.

**Student Talk:** Student will share ideas and the teacher will circulate for a few ideas to share out loud to the group.

**Teacher:** I heard a lot of interesting reasons why the author D.B Johnson chose to represent Henry David Thoreau as a bear. Some of you said because Henry David Thoreau liked nature and bears like nature. Some of you said that kids will like the bear. Some of you said that bears are smart and Henry David Thoreau is smart. All of these are interesting reasons and we would have to ask the author D.B Johnson to find out his reasons. Before we read a picture book, it is always helpful to do a picture walk to get familiar with the story. Let’s start our picture walk.

**Student Talk** (Teacher will slowly go through each page showing the pictures after each page the students can look, lean, and whisper to a partner what they noticed on the page. At the end of the story or after each page the teacher can say out loud some of the things they have overheard the students saying.

**Teacher:** Before we end our time with Henry David Thoreau today I want you think of one question you have about this story or about Henry David Thoreau and put your thumb up when you have one. (wait until all students have their hand up).

Ok now we will do a whip around and each of you will get a change to say your question out loud. I will write down our questions and we will see when we are done with our story if all our questions were answered. If you have the same question as someone else that is OK I will just out a check next to the question to show that more than one person had this question.

**(Student Talk,** Teacher will make a list of questions to refer to later)
Day 2 Lesson 2

Objective: Students will participate in a retell by retelling the events of the story to a partner periodically throughout the read aloud.

Teacher: Yesterday we learned about a man named Henry David Thoreau. Look, lean and whisper to your partner one thing you remember about Henry David Thoreau from yesterday’s lesson. (Student Talk: While students are sharing circulate and compile a summary to share with students).

Teacher: You all remembered a lot from yesterday’s lesson. I heard that he lived a long time ago. He loved nature. He loved to hike. He has interesting ideas. Today we are going to learn even more about Henry David Thoreau as we read the story *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* by D.B. Johnson. Before we begin, I want to share with you a quotation from Henry David Thoreau, a quotation is something that someone said.

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering…” (“Walking”)

I want to highlight a few words in this quotation. (highlight, walking, sauntering, and genius). These words walking, sauntering and genius are highlighted. First let’s look at walking. What does it mean to walk. I am going to ask a volunteer to show me walking. (pick a student to demonstrate walking). I am going to ask a students to show me running (pick a volunteer to show me running). Raise a quiet hand if you can tell me some similarities between walking and running. (student: you move from one place to another). Raise a quiet hand if you can tell me one difference between running and walking. (student: running is faster than walking). Why might walking be better than running. Look, lean, and whisper, to your partner why you might choose to walk instead of run.

Student Talk.

Teacher: I heard people say walking saves energy. Walking is more controlled. You see more stuff with walking.

Teacher: I also highlighted the word sauntering. Can we all say that together, sauntering. Let’s clap out the syllables to sauntering. (students clap syllables). Sauntering means to walk in a slow relaxed way, with out hurry or putting in too much effort. (New Oxford American Dictionary) Raise a quiet hand if you think you can show us what sauntering looks like. (pick a student to saunter). Ok we are going to play a quick game, I am going to move around this classroom. If you see me moving in a way that would match sauntering, moving in a slow relaxed way with out putting in too much effort, I want you to say “sauntering”. If you see me moving in a way that does not match our definition for sauntering, I want you to say “not sauntering”. Ok I am
going to start. (I will run around the classroom, walk fast, saunter, skip, saunter as the students label the movement, sauntering, not sauntering).

**Teacher:** Now it is your turn to show me sauntering. When you hear the sound of the bell everyone will stand up and quietly with out bumping anyone saunter around the classroom. When you hear the sound of the bell again you will saunter back to your circle spot. (ring bell while students saunter, reminding them sauntering is slow, relaxed, unhurried).

**Teacher:** You are all fabulous saunterers. Henry David Thoreau would be proud. Now we highlighted one last word and that in genius. If you are a genius you can be described as incredibly smart, or you can be incredibly good or talented at something. So if you are a sauntering genius you are incredibly good at sauntering. When we read Henry Hikes to Fitchburg be on the lookout for times when Henry is a genius at sauntering or walking in a slow relaxed manner.

Read aloud the book Henry Hikes to Fitchburg, stopping after each page to have the students tell their partner what happened on the page just read. Alternating partners on each page. After a few pages stop and reflect.

**Teacher:** Put your thumb up if you have noticed any patterns in this book. Ok I see a lot of thumbs up. Let’s look, lean, and whisper and tell our partner what patterns we have noticed.

**Students share with each other the patterns they have noticed in the book.**

**Teacher:** I heard many of you share that you noticed while Henry’s friend is working to earn money to take the train to Fitchburg Henry is walking and enjoying nature. You noticed that the friend does not seem to be enjoying himself as much as Henry is. Henry is doing things that are fun, walking on stone walls, climbing trees, paddling up the river, but his friend is doing things that are not fun, pulling weeds, painting, gathering wood, and cleaning out the chicken coop.

Continue reading the rest of the book again pausing after each page so that students can share with their partner what they noticed on each page.

**Teacher:** Let’s look back at that quotation by Henry David Thoreau:

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering…” (“Walking”)

Let’s think about this question for a minute, think in your mind and keep your answers in your head for a minute. Do you think Henry was walking to Fitchburg or was he sauntering, walking
in an unhurried relaxed manner. If you think he was sauntering what is your evidence that he was
sauntering. When you have an idea, put your thumb up.

If you would be willing to share your answer and evidence, put your thumb up. (as students share
their ideas the teacher will record their ideas on a piece of paper.

**Student share ideas** (I think he was sauntering because he did not just walk strait there he
stopped to climb a tree. I think he was sauntering because he took his time and picked black
berries instead of rushing to Fitchburg)

**Teacher:** Maybe we could say that Henry David Thoreau has a genius for sauntering. Now when
we started this lesson we asked the question, what message the author trying to tell us in this
story. Tomorrow we will think more about what message D.B Johnson might be trying to tell us
with this story.

**Lesson 3 Day 3.**
Objective students will be able to say in their own words what the message of this book is using
the stem, The message of Henry Hikes to Fitchburg is…

**Teacher:** We have been learning about Henry David Thoreau through a picture book by D.B.
Johnson that was based on Henry’s life. Let’s take a picture walk though this story but this time
you can help me tell the story. As I show each page, I will pick a popsicle stick with a students
name on it, that student can tell me in their own words what is happening on the page. If you
would not like to speak you can say “pass”. The teacher will show each picture and call on a
student to tell the class what is happening on that page in their own words.

**Teacher:** Now we started this exploration of the life Henry David Thoreau with the question
what is the message of the story. Think for a moment in your head and when you are ready you
can use this stem to share your answer, The message of Henry Hikes to Fitchburg is…. When
you are ready put your thumb up. Raise your hand if you would like to share your response. (The
teacher will write down all responses on the white board). Responses might include…

The message of this story is that it is better to go slow than fast.
The message of this story is that when you slow down you see more stuff and enjoy more stuff.
The message is that there is more than one way to accomplish a goal.
The message of this story is that when you work a lot you may make money but you may not
enjoy yourself.
The message of this story is that the fastest way may have drawbacks.

Once you have listed all of the messages you can ask is students would like to vote on which one
they feels captures the story best.