Using the Process Approach to Create an Effective and Efficient Secondary Writing Curriculum for Students and Teachers

Adam Koehler

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USING THE PROCESS APPROACH TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SECONDARY WRITING CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

By

Adam Koehler

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The summer before my first official year as a licensed English instructor, I shared coffee with a veteran teacher. We talked books, teaching strategies, and big ideas that all crackled with hope. It was the kind of aspirational teaching conversation that can only live in the summer.

As our coffee cups emptied, our conversation turned. The veteran teacher looked down, twisting the cream colored ceramic mug, and spoke: “If I could just get rid of the stacks of grading. I mean, I’m done. I won’t, can’t. I’m done grading all these papers…. Do you have any ideas?” I was taken aback. Sure there were going to several challenging parts of teaching, but grading essays wasn’t at the top of my worries. And besides, how could a veteran teacher be at such a loss as to ask a greenhorn like me for ideas?

Fast forward several years, and this veteran teacher’s words still echo in my head. Assessing students’ written work has become one of the most energy depleting parts of my teaching—detracting from precious energy that should be placed towards preparing instruction or building relationships. It also seems to weigh on many other writing teachers. Our teacher-talk always disparagingly refers back to the grading piles we slump beneath all school year. However, these conversations are isolated when they should not be. We rarely talk about the kinds of instruction and assignments that lead to the stacks of papers begging to be graded. Likewise, we rarely discuss whether or not our late hours of reading and making comments actually pay off with student learning.
Questioning the purpose of assessment in the larger context of writing instruction and student learning has led me to the research question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?*

**My Background**

I am a language arts teacher slowly falling in love with my subject. My path to teaching was circuitous. Initially studying communication and sociology, I was fascinated by the broad ways humans communicate and how meaning is constructed by factors larger than just the text. After several years working with young people in outdoor education, I made the plunge into graduate school and hesitantly moved towards the teaching of language arts, unsure if I would fit. So far, I have been amazed.

My background of studying communication in all its forms has set me up well. In secondary schools, teaching language arts centers around the broad world of communication: teaching students to read, write, listen, and speak. While state standards detail these objectives in specificity, the larger goal is apparent: students need to be able to communicate effectively.

During my first years of teaching, my classroom focused heavily on reading and speaking. I perceived writing as purely a responsive activity. I would ask students to read a text or discuss an idea, and I would then ask them to write, often to prove that they have read or thought about a concept. However, my perception of writing changed with a chance professional development opportunity.

In the summer of 2019, I was lucky enough to participate in the Minnesota Writing Project’s Summer Invitation Institute. Modeled from the original Bay Area Writing Project of 1974, the Minnesota Writing Project’s Summer Institute gathers teachers for a three-week period.
of lesson sharing, book club discussions, and writing. The experience was formative. I was reminded of the power of writing not only as a form of showing academic knowledge but also as a means of solidifying thinking, self-interrogation, and authentic connection. Writing brought me closer to my colleagues. It brought me closer to my own ways of thinking. I wanted my students to experience this same humanization. I wanted to place writing at the center of my language arts classroom.

The Minnesota Writing Project places a central value on supporting and trusting teachers. With so many well-intentioned initiatives, project ideas, and extra duties, teachers can be overwhelmed. It was incredibly refreshing to be part of a professional development that viewed a teacher's experiences as a form of expertise worth sharing. This capstone project is intended to support teachers with a writing curriculum that provides effective and efficient practices.

**Importance of Writing Instruction**

Writing skills are important in and out of the classroom. Improved writing instruction increases reading comprehension (Graham & Herbert, 2010) and promotes critical thinking across all content areas (Applebee, 1985; Britton et al., 1975). These benefits emphasize the ways that writing skills intersect and support the learning processes as a whole. The 2003 National Commission on Writing phrased it more bluntly by declaring that “if students are to learn they must write” (9). This declaration places the importance of writing in every classroom and subject area rather than the sole responsibility of language arts teachers.

Outside of the classroom, writing is equally important. Writing is an avenue for individual expression and a way to resist oppression (Gallagher, 2006). Written arguments and speeches have long been modes of garnering community organization for social change.
Similarly, writing is a primary mode of engagement with civic life and the global economy (Graham & Perin, 2007). Written communication impacts the local, regional, and national decisions made in our democratic society. In the world of work, writing is integral. 90% of white-collar and 80% of blue-collar jobs require writing skills (National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges, 2004, 2005, 2006). Therefore, by focusing on writing instruction, educators can make a significant impact on students’ academic, social, civic, and economic success in life.

**Capstone Project**

This project is designed to answer the question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?* This writing curriculum serves as a tool for all teachers to help improve writing instruction through research based methods yet focusing specifically on practices that allow teachers to maintain a manageable workload.

Inspired largely from the Minnesota Writing Project, I designed the curriculum around the process approach to writing instruction and evidence based practice in writing instruction models (Graham & Perin, 2007). Through a process approach, students actively write as teachers provide structured support along the way. The project emphasizes feedback methods that are effective and efficient thus reducing grading loads. Ultimately, this project strikes a balance between the work students and teachers are doing so that students can best learn and teachers can best teach.

**Summary**
The preceding chapter presented my journey towards asking the research question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?* I discussed the experiences that have led me to teaching in general and, more specifically, the centering of writing in my classroom. Therefore, a curriculum that combines effective and efficient writing instruction and assessment practices will provide benefits to teachers and students alike.

The following chapter explores the research on writing instruction and assessment practices. It begins by defining the process approach to writing instruction and then describes effective writing instruction practices. The chapter finishes by describing effective assessment practices, including the ways that teachers and students alike can be included in assessment in order to improve student learning.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The previous chapter described the personal rationale for pursuing this project. This chapter outlines the research supporting best practices in writing instruction and assessment.

It is often the case that the research on effective writing instruction and effective writing assessment are separated into distinct categories, resulting in fewer connections among the ways instruction and assessment can be combined to improve student learning. Also, writing instruction and assessment research may not always consider the significant burden that writing assessment can place on teachers. Students need specific feedback on written work in order to improve (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018), yet the increased pressure on grading is a factor in the types of assessments teachers are willing to assign (Applebee & Langer, 2013) and even impacts why some teachers leave the profession altogether (Kersaint et al., 2007). This pressure has led some teachers to replace extended writing assignments with simplified multiple-choice or short answer testing about writing, sacrificing authentic practice for ease of grading (Applebee & Langer, 2013).

These pressures lead to an important question: How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum? As mentioned, research on writing instruction and assessment are often separated; therefore, this chapter reflects those practices. By establishing the research on writing instruction and
assessment, connections will emerge in ways instruction can inform assessment and assessment can improve learning without placing an undue burden on instructors.

Effective Writing Instruction

Introduction

This section highlights several key components of effective writing instruction, beginning with an explanation of the process writing approach for writing instruction. The majority of what is known about effective writing instruction comes from the comprehensive meta analysis Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools by Graham & Perin (2007). This section describes the research surrounding several strategies that specifically connect with a process approach to writing instruction.

Process writing approach

As constructivism became widely accepted in secondary schools in the 21st century (Krahenbuhl, 2016), writing instruction has turned toward teaching writing as a process rather than a product (Cislaru, 2015). A process approach to writing instruction involves prewriting activities, sharing work with peers, multiple drafts, and paying close attention to writing conventions (Applebee & Langer, 2013). While a process approach to writing instruction is long standing, its implementation has evolved as research and technology have influenced writing (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). Thus, Howell, Butler, & Reinking (2017) have updated the definition of process approach writing instruction to include “extended opportunities for student
writing; writing for authentic audiences; peer interaction; a recursive process of writing including planning, drafting, and revising; and direct instruction in the form of conferencing or mini lessons” (p. 8). This definition places students’ work at the center, resulting in a teacher’s role being more like a guide, supporting students through the writing process.

The process approach to writing instruction is backed by strong research. In their Writing Next meta analysis, Graham & Perin (2007) found 11 effective strategies for the teaching of writing (see table 1). As a generalized concept, the process approach had a positive effect on student writing. More specifically, several process approach techniques were identified as effective strategies. These strategies include: (a) teaching techniques for planning, drafting, and editing a piece; (b) collaborative writing; (c) setting specific product goals (including writing purpose and characteristics of the final piece); (d) prewriting; and (e) the study of models. Whether through a specific strategy or an overarching approach, the process approach is an effective instructional model.

Despite the clear connection Graham & Perin’s work has made between the years of individual research projects connecting the process approach to improved student writing, national data paints a different picture. In fact, large scale data does not show any significant improvement on writing skills nationwide. Results from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation’s Report Card, have shown almost no change in reading and writing skills since 1969 (NCES, n.d.). These results pose a particular challenge to process approach advocates who have spread the model nationwide. How can one account for this discouraging data in the face of years of research that points to the positive effects of the process approach? Applebee & Langer (2013) hypothesize that while implementing new
classroom techniques may be easy, shifting deep held beliefs that ground teaching is much more difficult. Still another idea is that while many teachers think their teaching is process-oriented, it may not actually be so. This discrepancy between effective research and minimal effect calls for attention to the ways teachers implement a process approach. Providing new curriculum, grounded in a process approach, is one way to reduce teacher confusion or stress from implementing new ideas, however effective they are.

Table 1. Strategies found to improve writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended strategy</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
<th>No. of studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy instruction (teaching strategies for planning, revising and editing)</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarization</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative writing</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting specific product goals</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word processing</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence combining</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prewriting</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process writing approach</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of models</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing for content learning</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching Specific Writing Strategies

Teaching students specific writing strategies is a highly effective way to teach writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). This technique includes teaching students specific ways to engage in specific stages of the writing process. It could also include teaching specific ways of
collaborating with peers for drafting or revision. However, it also includes teaching students to write specific types of texts, such as narratives or persuasive essays. Though it is effective for all learners, using specific writing strategies may be particularly helpful for lower achieving writers (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Graham & Perin (2007) highlighted self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) as an effective model for delivering specific writing strategies to students. Self-regulated strategy development is categorized as the explicit instruction of writing strategies and self-regulation procedures such as self-assessment or goal setting. It can be used for teaching the general stages of writing or more specific writing tasks. A snapshot of the stages of SRSD include: (a) developing background knowledge on writing purpose and audience; (b) discussing the task and goal setting; (c) teacher modeling of the writing strategy at hand; (d) memorizing the strategy through mnemonic device, graphic organizer, cue cards; (e) supporting students in their practice of the strategy gradually moving students towards independence through scaffolding and regular check ins; and (f) independent performance of students with minimal teacher support.

Teaching with specific writing strategies offers many benefits, but it can become problematic if the strategies reduce writing to a formula. Bernabei (2005) has observed the way that some writing strategies can be overly formulaic and create a “schoolified essay” (as cited by Burke, 2007, pg. 84). Similar criticism has attacked the five paragraph essay (Brannon et al. 2019). Though it may be a simpler strategy to teach, it can limit students' consideration of writing structure. Therefore, it is important to consider writing strategies that employ room for student choice and self monitoring of their writing decisions.

Collaborative Writing
Collaborative writing can be defined as adolescents working together on any or all stages of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, and editing). Collaboration strongly impacts the quality of students’ writing and is shown to be more effective at improving student writing skills than individual writing composition (Graham & Perin, 2007). Incorporating collaboration in the writing classroom may ask students to work together on the entire writing process through a group assignment or focus on a single stage of the writing process such as brainstorming or revision.

Integrating collaborative work into instruction asks students to negotiate social interactions on top of academic tasks and can improve cognition (Volet, Summer, & Thurman, 2009) and metacognition (Cohen, 1994). Through collaboration, students learn new ways of thinking and also gain an awareness of their thought processes. Collaborative writing instruction can push students to clarify their own thinking and compare it to other points of view (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Collaboration can also foster reflection of the writing process as a whole (Berg, 2005). These benefits show how collaboration builds students’ awareness of writing as a communicative act rather than a solitary one.

Despite the benefits, students may resist collaborative writing assignments (Berg, 2005). This is, in part, because of the prevalence of teaching writing as an individual skill, and also, students may not have received explicit instructions on how to collaborate. Schuer et al.’s (2017) use of collaboration scripts to support collaborative writing tasks has helped guide students through the cognitive (explaining, summarizing), metacognitive (monitoring, formulating argument), and social (taking turns, using particular roles) steps of collaborative work. Another reason for resistance is students’ fear of being graded unfairly. To deal with this, Sutton (2004)
offers that an individual grade based on effort could supplement or bolster a group grade. This individual grade could be based on process journals or some other ongoing form of evidence.

Collaboration can also be integrated into smaller parts of the writing process. A notable body of work has found benefit of using peer reviews in the middle and secondary classroom to improve student writing (Prater & Bermúdez, 1993; MacArthur, Schwartz, & Graham, 1991; Boscolo & Ascorti, 2004; Yarrow & Topping, 2001; Olson, 1990; Dailey, 1991). Peer revision, along with other motivating peer-reading strategies such as Read Around Groups (RAGs), allows students to see classroom writing not as a transactional practice between student and teacher but as a larger interchange between author and audience, of which their peers are included (Gallagher, 2006).

In order for peer revision to be effective, there are a few important scaffolding steps to include. Gallagher and Kittle (2018) argue that teachers should write and model their revision alongside students so that they can see how writers rework a draft. Gallagher (2006) teaches students to differentiate surface level revision (changing words, phrases, sentences) from deep level revision (focus, purpose, sequence of piece, or point of view) by modeling both processes. Modeling can teach students the possibilities for improving a draft. However, the social pressure of offering critique to peers may impede honest feedback. Anonymous computer-aided peer revision programs such as SWoRD and Turnitin.com have been shown to improve student receptivity to peer review (Loretto, A. DeMartino, S., & Godley, A., 2016).

Using Writing Mentor Texts
Analyzing writing exemplars or “mentor texts” offers students models for constructing writing. Graham & Perin (2007) found the study of mentor texts to have a positive effect on student writing; however, Gallagher (2006) argues that students must be guided through a mentor text in order to make use of it. Students should be asked to consider specific elements of a mentor text such as descriptive language or use of quotations so that students can emulate these specific elements of writing.

In other words, students must be taught to read like a writer. For example, Gallagher (2006) suggests providing several example paragraphs of writing introductions with different methods of introduction such as starting with a quote, interesting fact, humor, or brief anecdote. Students are then asked to mimic the model with a new topic in order to internalize the method. Models can also be used to teach genre forms such as persuasive or compare/contrast essays. Gallagher & Kittle (2018) argue for the use and analysis of mentor texts in the major written forms commonly taught: narrative, informational, argumentative.

**Sentence Combining**

Accurate use of traditional grammar and punctuation are necessary writing skills. Errors in grammar and punctuation may impede teachers’ perceptions of student writing and may impair an audience’s ability to understand the writer’s ideas (Freedman, 1979). However, traditional grammar instruction, including the systematic teaching of parts of speech and structure of sentences, has actually shown a negative effect on writing skills across all ability levels (Graham & Perin, 2007). The issue is that traditional grammar instruction often teaches grammar rules separate from the context of writing. Effective strategies place grammar
instruction within the writing context and have a positive impact on student ability (Fern & Farnan, 2005).

Sentence combination on the other hand, has been found as an effective method of writing and grammar instruction (Graham & Persin, 2007). Sentence combining involves teaching students to create more sophisticated sentence structures by combining two or more basic sentences. This procedure is scaffolded by gradually adding complexity to the types of sentences and phrases combined. In addition to teaching grammar rules, sentence combination has the possible benefit of reducing cognitive load which can impede basic writers (Saddler & Graham, 2005). Graham and Perin (2007) identified the following levels of sentence combination:

**Table 2: Types of Sentence Combination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sentence Combination</th>
<th>Example Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combining smaller related sentences into a compound sentence using the connectors and, but, and because</td>
<td>The dog was tired, <strong>and</strong> he slept all day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedding an adjective or adverb from one sentence into another</td>
<td>1. The <strong>street was difficult to cross</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The <strong>street was busy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The <strong>busy street was difficult to cross</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating complex sentences by embedding an adverbial and adjectival clause from one sentence into another</td>
<td>1. My brother loves to play soccer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. My brother is <strong>six years old</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. My brother, <strong>who is six years old</strong>, loves to play soccer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making multiple embeddings involving adjectives, adverbs, adverbial clauses, and adjectival clauses</td>
<td>The coffee mug, <strong>tall and elegant</strong>, let off small wafts of steam, and each sip warmed me from toes to fingers tips.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These levels of sentence combination allow for scaffolding of different types of combination. Similarly, Gallhager (2006) employs a teaching strategy of sentence branching in
which sentences are branched at the beginning, middle, and end of a simple sentence. Students are taught to add appositives or prepositional phrases to each spot in order to add complexity and detail at the sentence level.

Summary of Effective Writing Instruction Strategies

Effective writing strategies are best seen through the lens of a process approach to writing. When teachers see writing as a process with distinct steps, they may more likely be able to identify access points to support that process. Graham & Perin’s (2007) meta analysis has identified eleven effective writing instruction strategies, yet the authors were clear that these categories do not in and of themselves constitute a curriculum. Instead teachers should consider their context in order to best implement these strategies. This consideration should also include modes of assessment that support student learning and do not overburden teachers. The next section of this chapter will highlight the research around writing assessment.

Effective Writing Assessment

Introduction

Assessment is an important part of the learning process; however, the term assessment has become synonymous with grading—a reduction that, on its own, does not add to student learning (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018). This section will discuss the research that highlights assessment as a component of the learning process. Likewise, assessing writing can be a
frustrating and time consuming part of a writing teacher’s job. Therefore, it is important to highlight assessment strategies that balance efficiency with student learning.

This section begins by defining assessment in relation to evaluation and grading. It goes on to address teachers’ positionality impacts the way they read and respond to student work. This will be followed by a discussion of the differences between assessment for, as, and of learning. This section will then finish by identifying ways that teachers can respond to student writing and how students can be involved in assessment through peer reviews and self-assessment.

**Defining Assessment**

In their book *180 Days*, Gallgher and Kittle (2018) observe that, ...the world is hungry for grades. In many schools, administrators and parents demand more grades, and they insist these grades be posted digitally for 24/7 access….the message seems to be that the more grades that are posted, the harder the teacher must be working. The more grades that are posted, the more kids must be progressing (105-106). The authors go on to proclaim that grading is not synonymous with assessment. To them, grading is the “finish line” that tells us where a student ended up and assessment is ongoing feedback that lets a student know where they are headed (p. 21). Similarly, Huot (2002) distinguished assessment from grading by explaining that grading writing assigns a score, grade, or label to a piece of writing. Assessing, however, is the communication with a student about a piece of writing. Therefore, one can generally see writing assessment as communication about the progress of a writing piece.
This idea of assessment as communication is taken further with the distinction between formative and summative assessment. In 1967, Scriven distinguished summative and formative grades, now a widely used categorization for school assignments. Huot (2002) observed that summative work is often associated with grading or testing which offers little or no opportunity for improvement since the “value is fixed” (p. 65). Formative assessment, however, may offer a clearer application to instruction.

Frey and Fisher (2011) argue that feedback through formative assessment can be a “powerful way to improve student achievement” (2). Formative feedback can help students know where they are going (feed-up), how they are doing (feedback), and where they should go next (feed-forward) (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Hattie (2012) argues that if students don’t receive any idea of what to do with feedback or where to go next, they tend not to use it. Because of this, Hattie goes on to recommend that teachers emphasize how students are receiving feedback over the quantity of feedback.

Connecting formative assessment to writing instruction, Fey and Fischer (2013) argue for the emphasis on formative assessment during the writing process rather than waiting for the final written product. Adding to this, the meta-analysis Formative Assessment and Writing by Graham, Herbert, & Harris (2015) found that “feedback to students [in grades 1-8] about writing from adults, peers, self, and computers statistically enhanced writing quality, yielding average weighted effect sizes of 0.87, 0.58, 0.62, and 0.38, respectively.” (523). This means that formative assessment proves beneficial for writing instruction.

For the purpose of clarity, this capstone project uses the term “assessment” broadly to encompass all kinds of communication about the progress of students’ writing, including verbal
conferencing, and written comments. It will also include modes of peer feedback and self-assessment tools. The term “evaluation” refers to formal grades and numbers assigned to student work. Also, while there exits a myriad of grading systems that have been created to mitigate the problem of confusing assessment and evaluation (see standards-based, project-based, credit-based or narrative-based grading), this capstone project explores assessment in the context of a traditional letter grade system because it is the context for many teachers.

**Teacher Reading and Assessment**

The process approach to writing instruction places students at the center of much of the instruction. However, when it comes to traditional, formal assessment, teachers are still the authoritative decision makers. Teachers determine the value of a written piece through grades, and their comments are often perceived as superior to peer comments (Huot, 2011). Despite the authoritative view of a teacher’s understanding of a text, subjectivity can impede the assessment and evaluation of student work.

Zebroski (1989) described the way a reader’s ideology can produce different understandings of the same piece. One reader may notice grammatical errors and find the piece unacceptable while another reader might follow a new critical perspective and only comment on the writing’s structure, calling for a reordering of ideas. Still other readers may focus on the piece’s logic or intertextuality.

A teacher’s positionality can also impact one’s interpretation of a piece. Chappell (1991) observed that when teachers read they look for specific elements. Chappell describes “reading like a teacher” as the “fault-finding summative evaluation of student writing that makes grades,
their bestowal and their receipt, so distasteful” (p. 55 as cited in Huot, 2002). Said another way, a teacher’s role may predispose them to notice and over value content or editorial errors a casual reading may not have picked up. This fault finding reading can overshadow any other possibilities a student’s piece might offer.

Similarly, Faigley (1989) found that what teachers value as important knowledge can change over time. Faigley describes how during the 1930’s canonical knowledge of reading and writing was most valued, yet in the 1980s, personal disclosure and the ability to articulate authentic emotion was most valued. This difference of value can also be culturally bound. Ball’s 1997 study of African American and Euro American teachers essay marking found that Euro American teachers marked African American and Hispanic American students’ work more harshly on mechanics. These findings show how cultural background of a teacher may impact their grading.

By acknowledging their positionality, teachers can mitigate these problems, and by refocusing writing assessment as a dialogue between reader and writer, students will more likely improve their writing and see writing as a communicative act.

Categories of Assessment

In an era of high stakes testing, teacher assessment is often equated with grades. Students internalize this shift and may begin working for a grade rather than for learning. Reframing the purpose and place of assessment in the learning process re-emphasises assessment as a supportive aspect of learning.
Earl & Katz (2006) differentiated assessment into categories of assessment for, as, and of learning. Assessment for learning refers to assessment that supports student learning through the process of completing an assignment. Assessment as learning involves instruction and assessment that fosters student’s metacognition. This includes reflective process and self-assessment. Assessment of learning refers to strategies that confirm what a student has learned through an assignment or instructional activity. This includes a verification of grades and numbers to delineate the value of a piece, but it can also include checklists or rubrics to show what was and was not accomplished by a written piece.

While each category serves an important purpose in the learning process, traditional models of assessment place more time and effort on the assessment of learning. This may lead to an imbalance in which teachers (specifically language arts teachers) spend considerably more time reading, commenting upon, and evaluating student work than students spend thinking about, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning in the process of assessment. Earl & Katz (2006) argue that more emphasis should be placed on assessment as learning (see figure 1). This reconceptualization makes space for students to consider the value of their own work by

\textbf{Figure 1: Balancing Types of Assessment} (Earl & Katz, 2007)
implementing teacher feedback, comparing their effort to that of their peers through peer
response, and reflection on their own writing process and product through self-assessment.

Table 3: Assessment For, As, and Of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment for Learning: supporting student learning through the creation and feedback in the assessment process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Instruction and assignments linked to specific learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Differentiation for student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher feedback throughout the learning process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment as Learning: fostering metacognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Student self-assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Goal setting and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Process Journaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self-monitoring systems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of Learning: confirmation of what a student has learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Traditional grading system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Holistic grading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student portfolios</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Categorizing assessments by the purpose they serve in the learning process allows teachers to be more intentional about the use of a particular assessment practice. The separation of assessment for, as, and of learning also leads to further discussion of the role teachers and students play in the assessment process.

Teacher-Led Feedback

Traditionally, teachers are seen as the sole assessors of student writing. Teacher-led feedback of writing including all of the ways teachers assess and provide feedback. The following research explains best practices in regards to the way teachers respond to student work.
**Written comments.** Teachers’ written comments on student work have the potential to give very immediate and precise feedback to developing writers. Yet, giving written comments is also an incredibly time consuming process with many teachers estimating 20-40 minutes to comment on an individual piece (Sommers, 1982). Given this time commitment, it is worth considering what kind of comments are most effective.

Written comments on a student’s work gives an audience to the piece. Without a reader responding, students often feel the piece has no meaning (Sommers, 2006). Teachers should take the role of an educated, supportive reader and avoid fault finding comments (Chappel 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). In one longitudinal study of Harvard students over four years of academic writing, Sommers (2006) found that students most internalized written comments when professors addressed writers as if their student’s were colleagues worthy of novel ideals intriguing questions. This is to say that comments that pushed students’ thinking through dialogue, question asking, and high expectations were most useful.

More specifically, effective comments address the content and ideas of a piece rather than purely structural or grammatical elements (Siebens, 2017; Straub, 2000; Gallagher, 2006). This can include comments that relate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of particular sentences or paragraphs to supporting the writing’s purpose. While constructive criticism is important (Sommers, 2006), it is generally more effective to focus on the positives of a student’s writing (Siebens, 2017, Straub, 2000, Sommers, 2006). Gallagher (2006) calls these “I like” comments and uses them to highlight effective techniques and support students to continue using the techniques.
It can be challenging to quantify exactly how much feedback is needed to be effective. However, it is clear when there is too much. Siebens (2017) noted that too many comments can overwhelm students to the point of struggling to engage in the written feedback. Siebens recommends no more than four comments in the margins with a 3:1 ratio of positive to critical comments. Siebens also notes that general comments at the end are most effective when delivered in a letter format. Continuous grammatical and punctuation corrections can be overwhelming to students. Instead, Siebens recommends that teachers share no more than two recommendations for areas for grammatical focus in the endnotes.

Responding to developing student writers can be overwhelming. Given a particularly problematic written piece, a teacher may be unsure exactly where to start. By focusing commenting energy on the one or two major issues with a writing piece, students are more likely to internalize comments and use the feedback to improve a draft (WAC Clearinghouse, 2019). Similarly, it is important to consider each piece of writing and each series of teacher comments in connection to future writing assignments and written feedback (Sommers, 2006; Siebens, 2017). Sommers (2006) notes that “the comments students identify as the most helpful are responses that straddle the present world of the paper at hand with a glance to the next paper, articulating one lesson for the future” (p. 254). Similarly, Siebens (2017) uses endnotes to communicate how students can improve their paper through revisions or lessons for future papers.

Finally, students may need to be taught what to do with written feedback. Comments given on final drafts may not be read or used for drafts. Broz (2005) argues that teachers should only ever comment on a draft before the final draft. When the energy of commenting is placed
Writing Conferences. Writing conferences are individual meetings between student and teacher during a class period where a teacher can observe a student’s progress on a writing task and provide verbal feedback towards the final goal. Anderson (2019) describes effective writing conferences as having three specific parts. First, the teacher should start with an open-ended question such as, “How is the writing going?” in order to gauge the student’s progress. Next, the teacher should quickly assess, through conversation and briefly going over the writing, what the student needs to learn in order to progress. Finally, tell the student what they are already doing well and what they can do to improve the written piece. At this final stage, mentor texts or teacher modeling can be helpful. The topic of feedback will be specific to each student and paper. However, teachers can generally focus on specific components of writing such as thesis statements, organization, conclusions, etc. This basic model allows for a balance of predictability and individual support.

Writing conferences can reduce the workload outside of class time by bringing that work directly face-to-face with students. Additionally, writing conferences reinforce the notion of writing as communication with an audience. Gallagher & Kittle (2018) argue that conferences can build trust with students when the feedback is immediate and personally tailored to the students needs. D’Agostino (2005) and Mezeske (2005) both employ group conferences in the
post-secondary classroom with each student reacting and offering some criticism to a piece and the teacher serving as a model who can coach students on expanding their comments.

**Rubrics.** Rubrics are scoring guides with pre-established values for any number of criteria being assessed. Rubrics allow students to view their progress towards specific objectives (Furze et al. 2015; Leggette, McKim, and Dunsford 2013). Rubrics can also be beneficial towards student self-assessment (Lipnevich, McCallen, Miles, and Smith 2014; Reddy, 2011). Lastly, rubrics also offer a level of ease towards assessing large numbers of student’s written work (Huot, 20020.

There are three major types of rubrics. First, Mertler (2001) distinguishes analytic and holistic rubrics. Holistic rubrics require teachers to quantify process and product without specific component feedback. Analytical rubrics, on the other hand, break writing components into separate categories, each of which can be graded on a scale. The third type, known as a single item rubrics, offers a single set of criteria for quality work of each component part of a written piece (Fluckiger, 2010). Each type of rubric offers benefits and drawbacks in regards to simplicity of use, energy to create, and ease of reading by students.

Gallagher & Kittle (2018) note that breaking writing into component parts can lose sight of the entirety of a written piece. Likewise, the evaluative labels on many rubrics such as limited, adequate, strong, or comprehensive can be vague and confusing to some students. This being said, rubrics do serve a purpose in explaining the areas of focus and specific measures students might use for improving subsequent drafts.

**Peer and Self Assessment**
The previous section described best practices for teachers responding to student work. The following section outlines research that supports the involvement of students in the assessment process.

**Peer response.** Peer response is an umbrella term that captures several forms of collaboration between students such as peer review, peer tutoring, peer feedback, and peer assessment (Hoogeveen & Gelderen, 2013). Quality peer response allows students to read and respond (written or verbally) to their peers’ written work.

As mentioned previously, Graham & Perin (2007) found student collaboration, such as peer response, to be an effective strategy in writing instruction. Specifically, Gielen et al. (2010) identified five benefits of peer response. First, peer response increases social pressure for students to perform well for their peers. Second, students find peer feedback more understandable since students may use less technical terminology than teachers. Third, students gain a better understanding of the assessment process when they actively practice it. This understanding connects students to learning objectives. Fourth, peer response is quicker than teacher feedback: students receive immediate feedback. These benefits are particularly notable given that peer response is equally as effective at improving student writing as teacher feedback in the same format (Gielen et al., 2010).

Additionally, peer response changes classroom writing from a transactional practice between student and teacher and returns it to a communicative practice in which readers have genuine reactions to a piece (Gallagher, 2006; Hoogeveen & Gelderen, 2013). In order to
achieve the full benefit of peer response, the practice must be set up appropriately to mitigate any possible challenges.

Challenges with peer review include inauthentic or shallow responses. Loretto, Martino & Godley (2016) observed that social pressure to save face can impede specific and critical student feedback. Online peer response tools such as SWoRd or Turnitin.com can mitigate this social pressure through anonymous student pairing. Additionally, peer response should be taught as a skill. Instruction, teacher modeling, and practice feedback are helpful scaffolds to support students giving higher quality feedback (Gallagher, 2006, Scherff, 2017).

Self-assessment. As mentioned previously, assessment as learning includes assessment activities that helps students understand their learning process (Earl & Katz, 2006). Increasing metacognition builds skilled independently thinking students.

In the writing classroom, metacognition can be built by asking students to reflect on the writing process and final product. For example, Mezeske (2005) asks students to reflect on written pieces through a short note about what they like best or worked hardest on with the paper. These notes help students identify their thinking about a piece and serve a place for dialogue between teacher and student. self-assessment can also take the form or a checklist or a separate reflective writing piece about the final draft. Nielsen (2012) found that self-assessment works best when students have models to compare their work against. This allows students to reflect on their writing’s effectiveness rather than simply their effort towards a draft.

Summary
This chapter outlined the literature on effective writing instruction and assessment practices. What is generally known about effective writing instruction comes from the 11 recommendations outlined in *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools* by Graham & Perin (2007). This literature review detailed the instruction framework of the process approach, specifically: providing students with specific writing strategies, teaching collaborative writing skills, using mentor texts to model effective writing, and teaching sentence combining to improve grammar and sentence form.

This chapter then outlined effective and efficient writing assessment strategies. First, the differences between assessment and grading were established as well as how a teacher's reading mindset can have unintended effects. Next, the chapter outlined the ways teachers can most effectively respond to student writing through written comments, in person conferences, and rubrics. The chapter finished by explaining the ways that students can be involved in the assessment process through peer response and self-assessment in order to build student’s understanding of the audience and metacognition of their writing practices.

The next chapter will outline the details of the capstone project of creating a writing curriculum in order to answer the question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?*
CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

Writing is an integral part of academic, civic, and work engagement. The practices for teaching and assessing writing are often discussed separately rather than the ways they interact. This can inadvertently lead inefficient or ineffective practices. Because of these reasons, it is worth asking: How can best practices in writing instruction and writing assessment be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?

Chapter two synthesized research on the best practices for writing instruction and writing assessment. This chapter describes the project which includes a generalized instruction and assessment protocol for integrating teacher-led, peer, and self assessment into the writing process. The project also includes an example narrative-writing curriculum that employs the instruction and assessment practices outlined in the protocol. This project was specifically designed for ninth grade students in a language arts classroom. However, the protocol is general enough to be adapted to several grade levels and genres of writing.

The example narrative-writing curriculum is aligned with Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010) and utilizes the framework of Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The remainder of this chapter describes the context in which the example curriculum will be delivered and the rationale for the curriculum framework.
School Context

This writing protocol and example curriculum are specifically designed to be implemented in an independent charter school serving grades 1-12 in a midwestern metropolitan area which uses a Montessori framework. In the secondary school, Montessori pedagogy can broadly be understood to include a student-centered classroom, use of seminar discussion, multilayered projects, open ended blocks of work time, and a variety of instructional and assessment practices (Donahue, HildeBrandt, Coad-Bernard, Coe, Scholtz, 2013). Therefore, the curriculum utilizes these pedagogical components.

In many ways, secondary Montessori teaching reflects a constructivist classroom (Powell, 2000; Limberg, 2016). As a theory of learning, constructivism is centered on the notion that learners construct knowledge by building new ideas, information, or experiences on to previous ones (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978; Fosnot & Perry, 2005). Combining the constructivist theory of learning with Montessori pedagogy, this curriculum aligns with school values, increases receptivity to students, staff, and administration. This curriculum supports ninth grade language arts students through a *Composition & American Literature* course all ninth grade students are required to take. As their first high school writing course, this curriculum sets the tone for writing expectations and skill basis for students’ high school academic career.

Historically, language arts curriculum has been teacher dependent. New teachers are provided little more than a syllabus or a potential book list to prepare their classroom which has left teachers to essentially create a curriculum from nothing more than notes. This curriculum serves as a guide post for writing instruction and assessment for future teachers who might take
over the position. This curriculum also serves as a model for other teachers in the building who integrate writing into their classroom.

**Demographics.** The school community self-identifies as a small school with only 358 students in grades 7-12. In alignment with Montessori’s philosophy, classes contain multi-age groupings with grades 7-8 and 10-12. In 2018, a specific program was created to support ninth grade students by providing grade specific programming to prepare students for high school classes. Class sizes range from 20-25 students.

Thirteen percent of students receive free or reduced lunch, and the student body is 70.9% white, 9.8% Hispanic or Latino, 9.8% Asian, 6.7% Black or African American, 1.1% of two or more races, 0.8% American Indian, and 0.8% Pacific Islander or Native Hawain. 18.4% of students receive special education services.

**Instructional time.** The school’s grounding in a Montessori Framework leads to a unique class schedule. In the language arts classroom, students meet four days a week for a 55-minute class period. Of those four class periods, three serve as direct classroom instruction and the third serves as “independent work” which is a semi-structured period in which students prioritize their classwork, check in with teachers, and collaborate with peers. This schedule results in 159 minutes of direct language arts instruction per week.

**Current Curriculum.** The current ninth grade language arts curriculum was teacher-designed in 2016. While writing strategies were taught, including some genre conventions for narrative and informational writing, writing was almost exclusively an assessment tool to show understanding of literature. In my experience, students were told to write rather than instructed how to write. Also, when writing was assessed, it was at the end of
the unit with little to no formative assessment, which may have resulted in a lag in feedback. These challenges can be met with more direct instruction on the writing process and writing skills as well as a more systematic model for formative and summative feedback.

**Instructional and Assessment Protocol**

The instructional and assessment protocol is a generalized chart that integrates peer, self, and teacher-led formative assessment into the writing process (Appendix A). The protocol lists several methods for each type of formative assessment. The protocol is generalized enough to be applied to any writing genre being taught and provides guidance for when and how formative assessment can be used during the writing process. Also included are singular examples of each of the peer, self, and teacher-led formative assessment categories.

**Curriculum Design**

An example narrative-writing unit is included here (Appendix C) to demonstrate how evidence based instruction and assessment practices can be integrated into a writing curriculum. The curriculum is inspired by the work of Kettle & Gallagher (2018) which integrates a process approach with regular student conferencing, mini lessons, and mentor texts.

**Rationale.** Some of the most effective practices in secondary writing instruction have been synthesized in Graham & Perin’s 2007 meta-analysis *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve*. As was discussed in chapter 2, Graham & Perin outlined 11 evidence-based strategies for improving student writing. However, the authors were very clear that the strategies in and of themselves do not constitute a full curriculum but that “[the strategies] can be combined in flexible ways to strengthen adolescents’ literacy development” (5). Teachers can apply the strategies as they best support a specific teaching context (student body, classroom size, school
mission, and relationship to other learning goals, etc.). Designing a writing curriculum can be an effective way to organize these strategies for use in a specific context.

**Curriculum framework.** The curriculum framework chosen for this project was Understanding by Design (UbD), developed by Wiggins & McTighe (1998). Also known as “backwards design,” UbD requires educators to consider learning goals before considering assessment or learning activities.

By defining learning goals and matching assessments and learning activities to those goals, every learning task and piece of instruction has a specific purpose towards learning. A further benefit of UbD is that it requires instructors to only consider assessment strategies that effectively measure student learning. Thus teachers can focus on effective and efficient instruction and assessment, which may improve learning for students and may reduce the grading load for teachers.

Wiggins & McTighe (1998) define UbD as having three major steps. First, instructors identify desired results including learning objectives, big ideas, and essential questions. Second, instructors determine acceptable evidence of achieving the learning goal. Third, instructors plan the learning instruction and activities.

Each unit in this curriculum follows a common template that aligns with the stages of UbD. First, unit learning goals are supported by the Minnesota Department of Education (2010) English language arts standards. Next, formative assessments are designed to support genre-specific writing skills with timely or immediate feedback, and summative assessments are designed to have students practice genre-specific writing in the areas of narrative, informative, and persuasive writing. Finally, learning activities are designed to scaffold genre-specific writing
conventions as well as support learning through a process approach to writing, which includes explicit teaching of the writing stages, peer collaboration and revision, analysis of mentor texts, and student/teacher writing conferences.

Limitations. The research on curricular impact of student learning is disheartening. On a large scale, considering one curriculum over another may offer little to no observable impact on student learning (Smagorinsky et al., 2010; Balazar et al., 2019). This is largely due to the challenge of pinpointing the impact of curriculum over any other classroom variables on student learning in a quantifiable way. While the variables of curriculum impact are hard to pin down, teacher quality (level of content mastery, pedagogical skills, cultural competency, self-awareness, and ability to impact the learning environment) has a significant impact. In fact, Hightower et al. (2011) argue that teacher quality is one of the most important factors in student learning.

Therefore, it may be helpful to view this curriculum as a support for teachers. While this writing curriculum is not meant to replace quality teachers, it can support teachers by helping them make decisions and plans that effectively support student learning in an efficient manner.

Project Timeline

The first three chapters of this project were written in the fall of 2019, and the curriculum was created in the Summer of 2020. The curriculum will be implemented in the fall of 2020.

Summary
This chapter outlined the methodology and audience for a writing instruction and assessment protocol and example writing curriculum that answers the question: How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum? The school context's emphasis on constructivist pedagogies offers a smooth transition to a process approach to writing instruction. This chapter also described the use of the Understanding by Design curriculum framework to connect learning goals, assessment plan, and instructional strategies designated for each unit of the writing curriculum. The next chapter provides a more detailed explanation of the writing curriculum and supplemental materials.
CHAPTER FOUR

Project Reflection

Introduction

This project focused on the question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?* This chapter serves as a reflection of my learning and places my work in the larger context of educational research. The chapter begins with my personal reflections as a researcher. It goes on to reflect on the information collected in the literature review. The chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the project and the impact it may have on further academic research.

Critical Reflection

This project has been incredibly challenging, but it has also been a great reminder of how much I enjoy academic research. During my undergraduate and graduate coursework, academic writing was always a satisfying challenge. Since becoming a language arts teacher, however, I have become a consultant of writing, setting my own writing to the side. This process brought me back to academic writing—the joy of getting sucked into a line of inquiry and wrestling with word choice and sentence flow.

Before finishing this project, I had wondered if someday I would like to pursue Doctoral level work. While there are many other factors that go into such a decision, I know now that I would quite enjoy academic research. During this project, I found great satisfaction in following the lines of argument from one source to the next, slowly building the invisible discourse of researchers before me.
While research and the construction of the literature review proved to be a satisfying challenge, the actual construction of my project was a frustration. My desire to create a curricular structure that infused efficient assessment practices was held back by my limited knowledge of curriculum design. I held high expectations of myself to create something new and innovative, but I could not figure out how to break free from the paradigm of how I had been taught as a student, prepared to teach as a graduate student, and had often fallen back on as a teacher for the past three years. In an abstract way, I knew what I wanted, but I couldn’t boil it down to something on paper.

Time pressure ultimately led me to settle on something familiar: I adapted instructional content from the work Gallagher & Kittle (2018) and organized the lessons with the Understanding by Design framework (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). This initially felt like I was somehow cheating, but as I sat with the content and curriculum framework, I began to see them in a new light. Specifically, I realized that I had been spending so much time trying to make summative assessment efficient and effective that I had overlooked formative assessment. I realized that despite hearing and reading about formative assessment so many times, I had never fully understood it.

My breakthrough with formative assessment occurred when I began to think of assessment primarily as feedback for students and that feedback was simply another form of instruction. So often I had imagined instruction to happen exclusively during the classroom hours and for assessment to occur on the margins (ie. teachers grading in the evenings and students reading those comments in the moments between or after classes). But when one sees
assessment/feedback as instruction, it legitimizes space for feedback to be given and received during the classroom hours.

I feel a bit sheepish to have gone through this graduate work process to only now understand formative assessment, but it’s true. My realization of formative assessment came late in the process of my writing. I included several forms of formative assessment into my curriculum, but If I had more time, I would spend even more energy detailing the system for collecting and using formative assessment during the writing process.

**Important Learning from the Literature Review**

**Writing Instruction.** My review of the literature on writing instruction focused on teaching strategies connected to teaching writing as a process. The strategies I narrowed in on were significantly influenced by the *Writing Next* report from Graham & Perin (2007). The *Writing Next* meta-analysis proved to be one of the most important sources for my research on writing instruction. The nature of a meta-analysis means that the effect of instructional practices can be understood overall rather than only considering the effect of one practice in a particular context.

However, it was also important to consider the connection between theory and practice. The work of Gallahger (2006) and Gallagher & Kittle (2018) proved to be invaluable with this connection. As practicing teachers, their research provided great insight into the ways the process approach could be applied to a classroom setting. They offered classroom specific ideas and examples of the very instructional strategies Graham & Perin (2007) were pointing towards.

**Writing Assessment.** As I mentioned earlier, My initially my research on writing assessment focused on finding the most effective and efficient method of constructing
summative feedback. I did learn about these components largely from the work of Huot (2011), Sommers (1982, 2006), and Siebens (2017). More importantly though, I learned that what I was looking for all along was a systemic way to use formative assessment when teaching writing.

One helpful source around formative feedback was Frey and Fisher (2013). They argued for the systematic use of formative assessment to measure weekly or even daily objectives connected to writing instruction. Missing from their work was conversation of efficient practices related to formative assessment. At one point they even referenced “swimming in formative assessment data” (68).

The connection between writing instruction and assessment were made more clear as I learned about collaborative writing and peer review. Graham & Perin (2007) were quite open-ended in their discussion of collaborative writing. Peer review, can be seen as both an instructional and assessment category depending on one’s motivation for including it in the learning process. In all of my research, the benefits of peer review were quite clear, but the details on making peer review effective were often vague or incredibly context specific. Therefore, I would have liked to further explore how to best set up a peer review practices.

Implication

The findings of my capstone project point to an increased emphasis on teaching writing as a process as well as an increased emphasis on formative feedback from teachers, peers, and self during the writing process. These findings are important for those who teach pre-service teachers, administrators who direct curriculum within a district or school building, and teachers who implement curriculum.
Increased preparation for pre-service teachers on instructing and assessing writing would greatly help students and teachers. Writing is an incredibly complex skill to teach, and the time it takes to assess writing can pose a significant impact on novice teachers. Increasing the education of writing and assessment theory will increase the effectiveness of novice teachers as they enter the profession.

It is also important for curriculum directors to consider these findings. These findings may point curriculum directors to offer professional development on the ways writing is taught and assessed. Doing so will create a culture in which students are given more opportunity to practice writing while also preparing teachers with strategies for managing the feedback needed to help students grow.

Lastly, these findings are most helpful for teachers of writing. By implementing evidence based practices into their classroom and using regular formative assessment from teachers, peers, and self, teachers will be able to increase students writing skills in a manageable format. My findings give not only permission but encouragement to make assessment and feedback a regular part of instructional time through practices such as writing conferences, peer review methods, and self assessment checklists.

Limitations

The findings of this capstone project may be less applicable to teachers whose curriculum and assessment practices are predetermined. The example curriculum I created is impacted largely by my school schedule and my autonomy over curricular decisions. However, the findings are based on valid research and evidence based practices which may provide justification for teachers advocating for change in their buildings.
Chapter Four Summary

This chapter serves as a reflection for the capstone project answering the question: *How can writing instruction and assessment practices be combined to create an effective and efficient writing curriculum?* This chapter began by exploring my personal learning from the research and project creation. I then explained the important literature used in my research, making connections between the research and my own understanding. I finished by exploring the implications the project may have on the teaching profession at large and also acknowledged the limitations of this project. Writing is a complex process for students and teachers alike, but the effort is well worth it.
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APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

Assign Writing Task → Brainstorming, prewriting, and drafting

Peer Feedback
- Online, anonymous peer revision
- Critical friends protocol

Self Assessment
- Student created rubrics
- Tracking the muddiest point
- Writing self checklist
- Compare to an example

Teacher Led
- Read 1st pages
- Confere 1-1 (no pre-reading)
- Small Group Conference
- Class Letter
- Audio feedback

Prepare to Revise
- Students set revision goals

Revision, Editing, Publishing

Teacher Feedback & Grade
- Rubric criteria circled, determines grade
- Grammar or punctuation mistakes are not marked
- Written comments are optional and should be “feedforward” comments

Students self assessment
- Quantitatively via rubric
- Qualitatively via reflection letter
Strategies for Assessment During or After the Drafting Stage

Peer Review Strategies
1. Online, anonymous peer revision
   a. Students upload digital drafts of their writing and anonymously provide feedback based on provided prompts. Examples: Peergrade.io and Perceptive.com
2. Critical friends protocol
   a. A protocol to discuss warm and cool components of a piece and prepare a student for revision.

Self Assessment Strategies
1. Student created rubrics
   a. Students are asked to create part or the whole of a rubric used to assess writing and then apply that rubric to a draft in progress. Helpful scaffolds for developing a rubric include:
   b. Providing the writing elements and asking students to identify basic, proficient, and excellent criteria for each writing assessment
   c. Using an exemplar model text to define quality writing
2. Tracking the muddiest point
   a. After each writing day, ask students to jot down an area of confusion or area of writing that still needs work. At the end of the drafting period students could write a letter to their past self, warning them about writing problems and how to prevent them.
3. Writing Checklist
   a. Students read their draft and check off the degree to which they have satisfied each required component of the writing piece (clear thesis statement, use of transitional phrases, strong conclusion, etc).
4. Example Comparison
   a. Students read their draft and then a model text on the same topic. The student creates a T-chart explaining the ways the two pieces are similar or different

Teacher Led Feedback
1. Student Writing Conference
   a. In a 2-5 minute conversation, students update the teacher on their writing progress. The teacher asks probing questions to better understand the writing piece. If pertinent, the teacher may offer advice or quickly reteach a component that needs work.
2. Small Group Conference
   a. The teacher facilitates a small group of students through a feedback session. It begins with each student sharing and reading an entire written piece of an excerpt beforehand. During the conference, the teacher asks students to share warm and cool feedback about the written piece or excerpt, probing students to expand their thoughts (What is good about it? What specific words are effective? etc). This a great scaffolding activity for the Critical Friends peer review protocol.
3. Class Letter (Adapted from Arthur Chiravali')
   a. Teacher reads 3/4 of the students writing assignments, taking notes on recurring
      issues. When enough data has been collected, the teacher writes a class letter on
      recurring issues in the writing pieces. In the subsequent class, students are asked
      to read the letter and then their draft, making appropriate changes.

4. Audio Feedback
   a. When providing comments on a draft in progress, consider audio comments with

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1 Chirabali, A. (2016) Explode these feedback myths and get your life back. *Medium*. November
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https://medium.com/teachers-going-gradeless/explode-these-feedback-myths-and-get-your-life-back-78ee97844511
Peer Assessment Example
Critical Friends Protocol: Lesson Plan

The Critical Friends Protocol is a procedure to help students offer productive peer feedback through a formal process. Groups discuss member’s writing one at a time while the writer listens and takes notes. During follow up lessons, the writer uses the feedback to revise their writing.

Objectives:
SWBAT verbalize strengths and areas of growth in a written piece
SWBAT revise a written piece based on verbal feedback

Instruction (50 minutes class period)
1) Divide class into groups of 3-4 students (2 minutes)
2) Review protocol with students (5 minutes)
   a) It can be helpful to emphasize a particular writing skill depending on the writing assignment and prior mini lessons
      i) Example: focus on strong topic sentences, elaborating on evidence, logical order of ideas, etc.
   b) Remind students that this step is revision not editing. Perpetual grammar or punctuation mistakes and be noted, but not every error should be fixed.
3) Perform protocol in small groups ( 40 minutes)
   a) Groups of 3 students should take up to 10 minutes per writing piece with 2 minutes to transition. Groups of 4 students should take up to 8 minutes per writing piece with 2 minutes to transition
   b) The teacher should visit student groups, asking probing questions about feedback and making sure that the students talk with each other and not directly to the writer.
4) Summarize and explain next steps (5 minutes)
   a) A helpful closure could be to ask 3 students about elements they will improve during their revision.

Assessment
1) Teacher observation of student discussion
   a) Are students discussing with each other or directly to the writer?
   b) Are students able to notice areas for revision or do they focus on editing mistakes?
2) Critical Friends Worksheet (turned in with final draft after revision process)
   a) What kind of notes did students take?
   b) Did students use feedback to make changes to their final draft?
Directions:
Discuss each other's writing pieces one at a time. During the discussion, the writer remains silent, listens, and takes notes. Those discussing the written piece should offer ideas and follow up questions to dig deeper into what makes a piece strong and how it could improve.

Procedure:
1) Decide on the order of which you will discuss the work
2) If you have not already, read the written piece or selected passage
3) Discuss the warm fuzzies of the written pieces through warm feedback
   a) What was effective, interesting, or enjoyable about the piece?
4) Discuss elements that could improve through cool feedback
   a) What was confusing, repetitive, or ineffective about the piece?
5) Invite the writer in to ask clarifying questions
6) Move on the next writer’s work

Going forward:
Feedback is a gift that you can choose to use or not. As you move towards revision, use the notes you took during the discussion to improve your writing. You will be asked to turn in these notes with your final draft, so keep them somewhere safe.
Critical Friends
Worksheet

Name:
Hour:

As the group discusses your writing piece, take notes here on global and local changes to your writing piece.

Warm feedback:

Cool feedback:
Questions you have:

Ideas for revision going forwards:
Self Assessment Example
Self Assessment Checklist

Self-assessment practices fosters metacognition and builds independently thinking students (Earl & Katz, 2006). One effective self-assessment practice is a student led checklist that prompts students to observe and reflect on a particular aspect of an entire writing draft or excerpt.

A Self-assessment Checklist works best if students are already in the drafting process of writing. The practice is meant to take up an entire 50 minute class period. Students who finish early can work on draft revisions.

Self Assessment Checklist Lesson Plan

Objectives:
- SWBAT articulate strengths and weaknesses of a written draft or excerpt

Materials:
- Self-Assessment Task Card
- Student Draft or Writing Excerpt

Instruction:
1) Introduce self-assessment
   a) Ask:
   b) Explain: A good self-assessment is one that is honest on what is good and what can improve about a written piece. Honest reflection on strengths and weaknesses allow you to build on your strengths and address changes that need to be made.

2) Model the self-assessment process
   a) Identify a goal in relation to the writing (example: building character, describing the setting, engaging the reader with “show, don’t tell” language.
   b) Read and visually display an example piece
   c) Talk through and annotate the parts that connect to the goal
   d) Talk through and annotate the parts that could be changed to meet the goal
   e) Ask students if you missed anything

3) Students Practice
   a) Students can self-assess an entire draft or a particular excerpt depending on the classes’ place in the writing process.
   b) Student read their draft or excerpt
   c) Students complete Self Assessment Task Card
   d) Students who complete early can begin making revisions
4) Closure  
   a) Ask three students for an observation they made about their writing as a result of the practice

Assessment:

The process of self-assessment offers benefits whether the teacher observes the students comments or not (Earl & Katz, 2006). However, self-assessment can be marked for completion. Teachers might offer written feedback in the form of a 3 point scale or a ✔+, ✔, ✔- scale noting the students level of engagement:

- 3 or ✔+: Student was detailed with the strengths and weaknesses of the piece. They evaluate their own thinking (ex. I used to think…. But now I think)
- 2 of ✔: Student touches on strengths and weaknesses, but they may only describe strengths and weaknesses and not evaluate their own thinking.
- 1 or ✔-: Student only identify strengths. Student only describes their thoughts.
Self-assessment Checklist Task Card
Narrative Writing

Directions:

1) Read over your draft so far
2) Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of your draft in relation to three goals of narrative writing

Goal 1: Use “show, don’t tell” details to convey feelings and abstract ideas

Do I meet this goal (check one): Yes___________ NO___________ Partially____________

Provide a specific example of you meeting or attempting this goal. It can be a direct quote or a paraphrase of overall use:
Goal 2: Develop at least one character using a variety of character development strategies (physical description, dialogue, idiosyncrasies, action, reaction, background, objects/possessions, thoughts)

Do I meet this goal (check one): Yes___________ NO___________ Partially___________

Provide a specific example of you meeting or attempting this goal. It can be a direct quote or a paraphrase of overall use:

Goal 3: Center your story around a compelling conflict that achieves a resolution

Do I meet this goal (check one): Yes___________ NO___________ Partially___________

Provide a specific example of you meeting or attempting this goal. It can be a direct quote or a paraphrase of overall use:
**Teacher-Led Assessment Example**  
**Class Letter Assessment Strategy**

Formative writing assessment provides an opportunity to observe students’ strengths and errors in for an ongoing draft. However, reading and providing individual comments on each draft can be time consuming (Sommers, 1982), and written comments may not be the most effective mode for re-teaching skills (Siebman, 2017; Straub, 2000; Gallagher, 2006).

The class letter assessment strategy allows teachers to notice trends in student writing and then address common errors and a whole-class setting.

**Set Up:**

The class letter strategy works well for a draft in progress or a particular component of a draft such as an introduction paragraph or integration of quotes. Students should already have completed either a full draft or a portion of the draft you wish to observe.

**Procedure:**

1) Identify one or several goals of the writing assignment  
2) Students turn in (digitally or physically) a draft in progress.  
3) The teacher reads ½-⅔ of the written draft taking note of common errors in relation to the writing goal and any other small errors that need addressing.  
4) The teacher then writes a “class letter” that explains the common errors in general. The letter should include explanations of the errors and general ideas for how to fix them.  
5) In a follow up class period, students follow the steps below to connect the class letter to their draft revisions:  
   a) Students read the class letter  
   b) Students reread their draft  
   c) Students make changes to their draft, making sure they address each error mentioned in the class letter

**Modification:**

This procedure can be adapted to different settings to meet students’ and teachers’ needs. Some ideas include:

- Using the class letter as a precursor to peer feedback. Peers observe for errors outlined in the class letter  
- The class letter can be used with a flipped classroom mode by asking students to read the letter as homework. This provides ample class time to work on revision  
- Applying the class letter can be modeled by the teacher before students revise their own work.
APPENDIX B
Generalized Writing Workshop Class Schedule

55 min classes

**Writing Prompt (~5 minutes)**
May include:
- Journaling
- Turn-and-talk discussion
- Stand and declare activity

**Teacher Led Study (~15 minutes)**
May include:
- Mini lesson on writing craft
- Modeling of writing or revision strategies
- Analyzing a mentor text
- Sentence combination exercise

**Writing Time/ Student Conference (~30 minutes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independently choose among the following:</td>
<td>● Lead individual or small group writing conferences ● Reteach mini lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Writing Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Brainstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Draft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Revisions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Editing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ publishing/printing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ To self or others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing (~5 min)**
- Reminder of upcoming deadlines
- Exit card to check mini lesson understanding (if applicable)
APPENDIX C
Example Unit Plan

Unit Plan: Narrative Writing

Unit Title/Focus: Narrative Writing
Subject Area: American Literature
Grade Level(s): 9
Estimated Amount of Instructional Time: 5 weeks

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Content Standards (MN State Standards):
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
   a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
   b. Use literary and narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, rhythm, repetition, rhyme, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
   c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
   d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, figurative and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
   e. Provide a conclusion (when appropriate to the genre) that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative or creative text.

9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

9.7.10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
   a. Independently select writing topics and formats for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.
9.9.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, including those by and about Minnesota American Indians, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
   a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
   b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
   c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
   d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

9.11.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

9.11.2.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
   a. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
   b. Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.
   c. Spell correctly.

Understanding (s)
Students will understand that:
● How authors build character in writing
● How authors organize scenes to build tension or convey emotion
● The concept of “show don’t tell”

Essential Question(s):
● We are inundated with stories from media outlets, friends, family, and so on. What makes a story stick with us? How can we build our capacity for storytelling? How can we convey larger truths through the creation of stories?
Student objectives (outcomes):
Students will be able to:

- Identify the ways authors use characterization, plot structure, specific detail, and dialogue to make a story interesting
- Use specific details to improve the telling of a story
- Create a complex character through characterization techniques.
- Construct a multi-scene story with a beginning, middle, and end

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s):
Students must create at least three narrative pieces over the course of the unit:

1. The 100 word memoir meant to emphasize descriptive language skills and serve as an early measure of the student’s skills.
2. The Detailed Scene assignment asks students to slow down time and “explode” a specific moment of a story.
3. The Multi-scene Story asks students to combine several detailed scenes to create a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Other Evidence:

- Exit Card
  - Descriptive Writing Practice
- Classwork
  - Practice “exploding” a moment
- Exit Card
  - Dialogue Rules
- Socratic Seminar Self Assessment
- Exit Card
  - Comma Rules
- Exit Card
  - Story Shapes
- Exit Card
  - Character development techniques
- Exit Card
  - Character development
- Peer Review writing draft
  - Student to student feedback
- 1-1 writing conferences (ongoing)

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Lessons labeled in green follow a teacher-led structure
Lessons labeled in blue follow a writers workshop structure

* Independent work is a secondary Montessori school practice in which students choose the work they will engage with. Independent work differs from a study hall in that students are guided through a highly scaffolded process of filling out planners, checking in with teachers about missing work, and prioritizing one piece of work over another. Gradually students are given more independence after they display responsibility.

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2 These writing assignments are adapted from the work of Kittle & Gallagher (2018)
**Learning Activities:**

**Week 1**
1. Introduction to the unit. Students create one sentence stories from cut up words.
2. Introduce 100 word essay with a handout and models
   a. Assign: 100 word memoir
3. Independent Work
4. Observe mentor text “Kid Nobody Could Handle” for its use of descriptive language

**Week 2**
6. Defining a scene and “exploding a moment”
   Due: 100 word memoir
   Assign Reading “Story of an Hour”
   Assign Detailed Scene Writing Assignment
8. Independent Work
9. Socratic Seminar on “Story of an hour”
   Due: “Story of an Hour” annotations

**Week 3**
10. Mini lesson on STAR Revision Method (Substitute, Take things out, Add, Rearrange)
11. Peer Review of Draft
12. Independent Work
13. Mini Lesson- separating independent and dependent clauses with a comma

**Week 4**
14. Mini Lesson- Story Shapes
   a. Due Detailed Scene Assignment
15. Mini lesson on 8 ways to build character
   a. Assign Multi Scene Story
16. Independent Work
17. Observe mentor text *Nita Goes Home* for characterization

**Week 5**
18. Mini peer review organization
19. Peer review Day (students upload work to peergrade and provide anonymous feedback)
20. Indy Work
21. Full Writing Workshop Day
Week 6

- Due: Multi Scene Story
Lesson Plans in Detail

Lesson 1: Introduction to Narrative Writing

Standards:
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
   f. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

Objectives:
● SWBAT describe the flow of a regular class during a writing workshop day
● SWBAT create a “one-sentence story”

Materials:
● One-sentence Story Handout, cut and placed into envelopes (one set per group of 3-5 students)
● Narrative Unit Slideshow
● Copies of “Kid Nobody Could Handle” by Kurt Vonnegut or any other text that models descriptive language (one per student)

Instruction:
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. What makes a story good?
2. Opening Discussion: what makes a story good? (5-8 min)
3. Define Narrative (2-3 min)
   a. The telling of a story. A narrative may zoom in or skip over specific events to emphasize a story. Narratives can be written, oral, or digital.
4. Explain (5 min)
   a. Explain the flow of a writing workshop class period. Explain the major assessments and what is expected in order to succeed in this unit.
5. Explore (5 min)
   a. Display the phrase “For Sale: Baby shoes, never worn” attributed to Ernest Hemingway.
   b. Ask students: “What is the story behind this? How do you know?”
   c. Explain: Sometimes, a good story makes you, the reader, fill in the gaps. This can make us more engaged in a story.
6. Practice (30 min)
   a. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students
   b. Provide each group with an envelope filled with single words cut out from a series of “one-sentence stories”
   c. Groups use the cut up poems to create “one-sentence stories”
   d. After some time, students share their “one-sentence stories with the class
e. If time remains after each group has shared, display students with the original “one-sentence stories” and ask the class, “what makes these stories work?”

7. Closing (5 min)
   a. Assign students to read “The Kid Nobody Could Handle” by Kurt Vonnegut by the end of the week
   b. They should annotate the text with one meaningful comment per page, paying particular attention to descriptive language

Assessment
   ● Pre Assess (Formative)
     ○ During the opening discussion, take note of what students consider important to parts of a story. Does anyone mention descriptive language or literary form? Do they focus on plot and characters? Do they focus on genre?
Lesson 2: Mini Lesson on 100-Word Memoir Introduction

Standards
1. 9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
2. 9.7.10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
   a. Independently select writing topics and formats for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.

Objectives
SWBAT use descriptive (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel) language to write
SWBAT write a 100-word memoir

Memoir
100-word Memoir Assignment (1 per student)
Narrative Unit Slideshow
Example 100-word memoirs
   - Reader’s Digest
   - 100wordstory.com

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Write about a time where something really funny happened to you
   b. Write about a time where something scary happened to you
   c. Write about a time when you found something you had lost forever
   d. Write about an experience when your understanding of a person changed

2. Examine Models (15 min)
   a. Explain and assign the “100-word Memoir” assignment
   b. Examine a model
      i. Provide students two examples and discuss similarities and differences
         1. “What is effective or ineffective about these models?”
         2. “What are the similarities or differences between these models?”

3. Writing Time/Student conferences (30 min)
   a. Being the first writing time, make sure expectations for writing are clear. Students can choose from the following:
      i. Writing
      ii. Reading a peers work
      iii. Choice silent reading
      iv. Reading aloud to a friend
   b. Provide students with example 100-word memoirs digitally or through print
   c. Conferences
      i. Meet with students one-on-one to discuss what they might write about for their 100 word memoir
4. Closure (5 min)
   a. Turn and talk: What are some important elements of the 100-word memoir?
   b. Then ask three students to share what they think is important about the 100-word memoir format

Assessment
- Student Conferences (formative)
  - Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
Lesson 3: Mini Lesson on Descriptive Language

Standards
1. 9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
2. 9.7.10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
   i. Independently select writing topics and formats for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.

Objectives
SWBAT use descriptive (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel) language to write
SWBAT describe an author’s use of descriptive language

Materials
Copies of “Kid Nobody Could Handle” by Kurt Vonnegut (or any other text that models descriptive language)

Instruction:
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Students draw an outline of their hand and answer one of the prompts inside the outline of their hand:
      i. You’re digging through your backpack, you get to the very bottom and it’s then that you feel it… describe what you feel.
      ii. It’s dark outside. You’ve dropped a coin and you’re trying to pick it up when suddenly you feel it… describe what you feel.
      iii. You’re walking through your kitchen without shoes until suddenly you feel it… describe what you feel beneath your foot.

2. Mini Lesson (15 min)
   a. Introduction: Remind students that we are focusing on how to make engaging stories and one way to do this is through descriptive language.
   b. Instruct: Define descriptive language
      i. Sensory detail (visuals, sounds, smells, physical feelings, tastes) can help the reader imagine what it’s like to be in the story.
      ii. Figurative language (Simile, metaphor, hyperbole, etc) can add on to sensory detail to make it even more vivid.
   c. Examples:
      i. Provide examples of each sensory detail and a few different types of figurative language
   d. Analyze 1-2 sections of “Kid Nobody Could Handle”
      i. Ask student if they noticed Vonnegut using any descriptive language
1. Read 1-2 examples of descriptive language out loud
   ii. With a “Turn and Talk,” invite students to discuss what effect the descriptive language had on the story
   e. Invite students to use descriptive language in their own writing today
3. Writing Time/Student Conferences (25 min)
   a. Students can choose one of the following
      i. Writing
      ii. Reading a peers work
      iii. Choice silent reading
      iv. Reading aloud to a friend
   b. Conferences
      i. Meet with students one-on-one to discuss what they might write about for their 100 word memoir
4. Closure (3 min)
   a. Ask students what is due next week and what elements
Assessment:
   ● Exit card (Formative)
      ○ What is one way Kurte Vonnegut used descriptive language in the story? Where students able to answer with enough detail?
Lesson 4: Mini Lesson on Defining a Scene and “Exploding a Moment”

Standards:
9.7.10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
   b. Independently select writing topics and formats for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.

9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
   g. Use literary and narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, rhythm, repetition, rhyme, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Objectives:
SWBAT define a written scene
SWBAT explain how to slow down a moment through written detail

Materials:
Narrative Unit Slideshow
Video: “Slowing down time (in writing & film) - Aaron Sitze” published by Ted-Ed
Exploding a Moment Practice Worksheet

Instruction:
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Choose a picture from New York Times “What’s going on in this picture.” Ask students to write about all the sensory details they can from the perspective of a person in the scene.

2. Mini Lesson: Defining a Scene and “Exploding a Moment” (15 min)
   a. Introduce: Remind students that we have been focusing on descriptive language to engage our readers. One other way to make it seem like time has slowed down such that we are noticing every single detail in the moment.
   b. Define:
      i. A scene is the basic unit of a story in which at least one character does something. It could be a conversation, an action, an observation, etc.
      ii. “Exploding a moment” means slowing down description such that it feels like time has stopped and we are noticing every detail. This is a great technique when we want to emphasize a moment or let the story breathe after some action has occurred.
   c. Watch: “Slowing down time (in writing & film) - Aaron Sitze” published by
d. Ask: “Aaron Sitze tells us that in order to slow down time with our writing, we need to actually write a lot more. When might you want to slow down time in your story?”

3. Analyze a Mentor Text (10 min)
   a. Read the example aloud
   b. Ask: What details does this author use to slow down time? Is it effective or not?

4. Practice (10 min)
   a. Have student practice exploding a moment by expanding a short passage to a longer one using the “Exploding a Moment Practice” worksheet

5. Closure (2-3 min)
   a. Remind students to turn in their “Exploding a Moment Practice” worksheet

Assessment:
- Student Conferences (formative)
  - Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
- Exploding a Moment Classwork (formative)
  - Quality work will include sensory details, emotional language, and feeling that fits the overall purpose of the scene.
Lesson 5: Mini Lesson on Dialogue Rules

Standards:
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

9.7.10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
  c. Independently select writing topics and formats for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.

9.11.2.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Objectives:
SWBAT use a comma and quotation marks to punctuate dialogue

Materials:
Narrative Unit Slideshow
Dialogue Rules Handout

Instruction:
1. Writing Prompt (10 min)
   a. Watch “If you give a 12 year old a telephone” by WYC
      i. If you have a phone, tell the story of how you got it and how it felt
      ii. Tell a story of when a phone really helped you out
      iii. Tell a story of when a phone was a problem

2. Mini Lesson: Dialogue (10 min)
   a. Introduce: Remind students that we are striving for engaging stories. Another way to make stories engaging is to add dialogue.
   b. Explain:
      i. Provide students the dialogue rules handout and have them glue or tape it to their notebook.
      ii. Read and explain each rule, writing examples on the board as you go.
      1. Possible examples:
         a. “Tuesday is the best day,” said Sue.
         b. Abdul sneered, “I’d rather not. I never want to go there again.”
         c. “What?” yelled Bao. “I couldn’t hear you over my music!”
         d. “Wait,” asked Amile, “don’t you want to come with?”
      iii. Practice: Ask students to create a fictional conversation between two
teachers at school. One this is done, students can move in to writing time

3. Writing Time/Student Conferences (30 min)
4. Closure (1-2 min)
   a. Remind students to turn in their exit cards and to finish their reading for the
      Socratic Seminar at the end of the week.

Assessment:
- Student Conferences (formative)
  ◦ Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing
    errors are being made
- Exit Card (formative)
  ◦ How many rules did the students remember? Quality responses should follow
    every dialogue rule on the handout.
Lesson 6: Socratic Seminar

Standards:
9.9.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, including those by and about Minnesota American Indians, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
   e. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
   f. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
   g. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
   h. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Objectives:
SWBAT articulate effective elements of a story
SWBAT to build off of peers comments to carry on a conversation about a story

Materials:
 Copies of “Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

Instruction:
1. Set Up and Overview
   a. With student help, set up the classroom into a circle of chairs. Students should have a copy of the story available. Remind students of the norms for Socratic Seminar and then pose an opening question. Students can answer one at a time. The option of a talking piece can be a helpful scaffold. If conversation wanes, a follow-up question can be posed. Students are also invited to pose their own questions so long as the conversation does not stray too far from the text.

2. Norms
   a. Speak so that all can hear you
   b. Show active listening through your body language
   c. Speak without raising your hand
   d. Refer to the text
   e. Ask
   f. Speak to each other, not just the facilitator
   g. Ask for clarification. Don’t stay confused
   h. Invite and allow others to speak
   i. Consider all viewpoints and ideas
j. Know that you are responsible for the quality of the seminar

3. Opening Question
   a. What happened to Mrs. Mallard at the end of the story? Why?

4. Follow Up Questions:
   a. Did Mrs. Mallard love her husband?
   b. Why does Mrs. Mallard look out the sky when she locks herself in her room?
   c. In what ways does Chopin use descriptive language?

Assessment:
- Seminar Self Assessment (formative)
  o Students complete a seminar self-assessment on their engagement with the seminar.
- Observation and notes (formative)
  o Who participated in the conversation? What percentage of the class participated?
Lesson 7: Mini Lesson on S.T.A.R. Revision Method

Standards
(Ongoing) 9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Objectives
SWBAT identify and articulate elements of a written piece that could be changed to improve the piece

Materials
Example Revision Handout

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Watch the video “For My Grandmother” by Phile Kaye
   b. Write
      i. Write about a funeral
      ii. Write about a party

2. Mini Lesson (15 min)
   a. Introduce: Explain to students that nobody ever gets it right the first time when they write. The revision stage is a regular process of writing used to enhance our writing.
   b. Explain: We can use the mnemonic S.T.A.R. to help us remember the changes we can make to a piece to make it better.
      i. Write each piece of the mnemonic device on the board and explain it as you go
         1. Substitute repetitive words, unclear verbs, pronouns for proper nouns (and vice-versa)
         2. Take out opinions that cannot be supported (for informational writing), information not connected to the main idea, contradictory ideas
         3. Add textual details; evidence to support a point (informational text); details to show who, what, when, and where
         4. Rearrange ideas to make stronger connections, to show the order of events, to show increasing degree (good, better, best)
   c. Model: Read aloud the original and revised written pieces from the Example Revision Handout. Think aloud on the various ways the writer made improvement using the phrase “I noticed…This helps the piece by….”
      i. Examples:
         1. The writer rearranged the order in which they described the events
2. The writer added figurative language to detail the way they felt
3. The writer begins the story with dialogue for emphasis
3. Writing Time/Student conferences (30 min)
4. Closing (5 min)
a. Remind students to complete their draft by tomorrow
Assessment:
● Student Conferences (formative)
  ○ Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
● Next Day—Peer Review Comments (formative)
  ○ Quality comments will use elements from the S.T.A.R. mnemonic device.
Lesson 8: Peer Review on Detailed Scene Assignment

Standards
9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Objectives
SWBAT write

Materials:
Computers for each student

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. What do I perceive as a risk to being vulnerable?
   b. How could other people help me?
   c. What strengths can I offer others?

2. Peer Review (45 min)
   a. Students read and give feedback to peers anonymously through the PeerGrade website. Students should provide feedback for at least two drafts.
   b. If there is time remaining, students can begin reading over the feedback they were given and start making changes.

3. Closure (5 min)
   a. Ask three students to share an example of good feedback they received on their draft.

Assessment:
- Peer Review Comments (formative)
  o Skim through the feedback students gave each other on their drafts. Notice if students connected their comments to the S.T.A.R. mnemonic device. Quality comments will be a mix of positive and critical observations and should also move beyond simple editing changes.
Lesson 9: Mini Lesson on Comma Rules for Separating Clauses

Standards
9.11.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

9.11.2.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Objectives
SWBAT use a comma to separate clauses

Materials
Comma Detective Handout (one per student)

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
      i. Pretend you were witnessing this scene first hand. Describe what you see, smell, hear, feel, or maybe even taste.

2. Mini Lesson (20 min)
   a. Introduce: Explain to students that academic writing uses rules for grammar in order to make sure we can all communicate complex sentences accurately.
   b. Pass out the Subordinating and Coordinating Conjunction handout and ask students to paste the handout into their notebooks.
      i. Explain we can define two types of clauses: independent and dependent. Independent clauses can stand alone. However, dependent clauses need the help of an independent clause to be grammatically correct.
      ii. Oftentimes, we can mark a clause as dependent if it starts with a subordinating conjunction.
      iii. Coordinating conjunctions, however, are a special type of word that is used to combine sentences.
      iv. Pass out the Comma Detective Handout to students. Starting with Rule #1, ask students to observe the Detective sheet to see if they can figure out what the rule is for us to know whether we should or shouldn’t use a comma with this particular kind of sentence.
         1. As students work, walk around the classroom supporting students who may be struggling. A great hint to provide is to ask students which kinds of clauses are there before and after the comma or where the subordinating conjunction is.
      v. Once students have had some time, bring the class back and see if anyone
was able to notice the rule. Write down the rule. It can be helpful to write it down in the format of “If ____ , then ____ ”

1. If the sentence starts with a dependent clause and ends in an independent clause, then we separate the clauses with a comma.
   a. DC, IC
2. If the sentence starts with an independent clause and ends with a dependent clause, then we do not use a comma to separate them.
   a. IC DC
c. Repeat the same process for Comma Rule #2
d. Ask students to compete the comma rule exit card

3. Writing Time/Student conferences (20 min)
   a. Give priority conference time with students who were not present for the peer review day.

4. Closure (5 min)
   a. Remind students their best drafts are due the following class.

Assessment
● Student Conferences (formative)
   ○ Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
● Exit Card on Comma Rules (formative)
   ○ How many students comprehended the comma rules and which rules were more easily understood?
Lesson 10: Mini Lesson Story Shapes

Standards
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  h. Use literary and narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, rhythm, repetition, rhyme, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  i. Provide a conclusion (when appropriate to the genre) that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative or creative text.

Objectives
SWBAT outline a multiscene story
SWBAT create a conclusion to a multiscene story

Materials
Narrative Unit Slideshow
Shape of Stories Handout
Video: Vonnegut on the Shape of Stories (5 min)

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Students observe various portraits from the Humans of New York Project
      i. Write from the perspective of one of these characters.
         1. What are they like?
         2. What is something they want?
         3. What is a problem they need solving?
         4. Where are they going today, what issues will they run into?

2. Housekeeping: Reflection and Turning in Project (20 min)
   a. Before students turn in their detailed scene, ask them to write a reflection letter. The letter should be addressed to you and should address the following prompts:
      i. Looking back at the rubric, what do you think you did really well with this assignment? What could improve?
      ii. Thinking about the writing process (brainstorm, draft, revise, edit, publish), which stage went really well? Which were more challenging?
      iii. Overall, what do you want me to notice as I read your detailed scene?

3. Mini Lesson (20 min)
   a. Introduce
      i. Explain to students that they have been focusing on writing a single scene, but now we are going to explore how to combine those individual scenes to create tension.
   b. Deliver

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i. Pass out the Shape of Stories Handout and watch Vonnegut on the Shape of Stories

ii. Discuss
   1. Which story shapes stick out to you? Why?
   2. Which story shapes do you think might be hard to write? Easy?

iii. Practice
   1. As an exit card, ask students to practice outlining a story idea for the character they describe at the beginning of class using the story shape handout.

4. Closure (5 min)
   a. Ask three students to share some ideas from their story outline

Assessment
1. Exit Card (formative)
   a. Were students able to create a basic beginning, middle, and end of a story?

2. Detailed Scene Project (Summative)
   a. Use project rubric to measure how students improved in their writing skills
Lesson 11: Mini Lesson on 8 Ways to Build Character

Standards
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
   j. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

Objectives
SWBAT articulate the eight ways to develop characters
SWBAT use at least one character development technique in writing

Materials
Handout- Eight Ways to Develop Characters

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Listen to an audio story from StoryCorps such as the story “For Old Friends, Hospital Work Brings New Challenges During COVID-19”
      i. What does duty mean to you?
      ii. What does sacrifice mean to you?

2. Housekeeping (5 min)
   a. Introduce the next writing project, the Multi Scene Story
   b. Read through the assignment with students and answer any questions.

3. Mini Lesson (15 min)
   a. Introduction
      i. So far we’ve been focusing on descriptive language to create pictures in our mind of places or events. We are going to shift now to think about how we can use techniques to help our readers imagine characters in their minds.
   b. Explain
      i. Pass out the handout Eight Ways to Develop Characters
      ii. Read the eight techniques out loud
      iii. With a turn and talk, ask students to read and discuss at least three techniques and examples
      iv. Coming back to a large group and discuss
         1. Which techniques might be easier to use in your writing? Why?
         2. Which techniques might be more challenging? Why?
   c. Practice
      i. Display several pictures of people from the Humans of New York Project. As an exit card, ask students to practice using at least one character building technique to describe one of the people pictured.

4. Writing and Student Conference Time (25 min)
5. Closure (5 min)
a. Ask three students to share their character descriptions aloud

Assessment

- Student Conferences (formative)
  - Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
- Exit Card on character development (formative)
  - What percentage of students were able to use a character development strategy correctly? Did any students use two or more?
Lesson 12: Mini Lesson on Mentor Text Observation

Standards
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Objectives
SWBAT articulate how an author uses character development techniques in writing

Materials
Copies of “Nita Goes Home” from How to be Happy by Eleanor Davis

Instruction
1. Writing Prompt (5 min)
   a. Watch a reading of “The Revenant” by Billy Collins and then ask students to write from the perspective of an animal or object.
2. Mini Lesson—analyzing a mentor text
   a. Introduction
      i. Explain to students that we have recently been exploring story structure and character development. Today we are going to see how an author does that in a graphic story format.
   b. Deliver
      i. Pass out copies of “Nita Goes Home” by Eleanor Davis and read it as a class (as best you can—it can be hard to read graphic novels aloud).
      ii. First, discuss the story to make sure they all understood the events
          1. Why did Nita have to go home?
          2. Why were people wearing the tox off suits?
          3. What is Nita doing when she counts while breathing? Why do you think she does this?
          4. Where does Nita end up? Why do you think she ended here?
      iii. Then, ask students to revisit the handout on story shapes from earlier in the week and decide what story shape this story is. Hopefully students notice that it is a “person in a hole” kind of story.
      iv. Then, ask the students what kind of character Nita is and what details the author included to let us know this?
          1. Students should notice the way Nita speaks, her idiosyncrasy of counting and breathing when she is stressed, and the background information of her being a rebellious teen.
   c. Practice
      i. In the form of an exit card, ask students to write or draw (in no more than a paragraph or a page) a new way of developing Nita based on our eight ways of developing characters.
3. Writing and Student Conference Time

Assessment
● Student Conferences (formative)
○ Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
● Exit Card on character development (formative)
  ○ What percent of students were able to create a new way of showing off Nita’s character. Also, observe the level of detail students were able to include.
Lesson 13: Mini Lesson on Revising Organization

Standards
9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Objectives
SWBAT articulate the changes an author made to improve a written piece
SWBAT reorganize a written piece for clarity and effect

Materials
Revision Example Story: Skipping a Heart Beat

Instruction
1. Stand, Share, Sit Reflection (5 min)
   a. Students stand around their table, choose a question, and share one at a time. When they have finished, they should sit down.
      1. What is going well with your writing so far?
      2. What could improve with your writing?
      3. What is something you’ve learned in this unit so far?

2. Mini Lesson (15 min)
   a. Introduction
      i. Explain to students that revision is an essential part of the writing process. Different from editing, which is attention to small phrases or punctuation, in revision we pay attention to how the overall piece is working. Today we are going to focus on the organization of scenes.
   b. Explain
      i. Pass out the Revision Example Story
      ii. Read the 1st draft aloud and then ask students what is working well and what could improve.
      iii. Read the 2nd draft aloud and now ask students what changes the author made.
      iv. Students should notice how the author rearranged the order of the events for clarity and effect
   c. Practice
      i. Invite students to either revisit their drafts and consider the order of events or to outline their stories if still drafting

3. Writing and Student Conference Time (30 min)

4. Closing (5 min)
   a. Remind students to bring a draft to class tomorrow
   b. Ask 1-2 students to share how they might reorder their work

Assessment
● Student Conferences (formative)
○ Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made

● Compare 1st draft to best draft changes (Summative)
  ○ Students will be asked to turn in 1st drafts along with their best drafts. Observe the best drafts to see what changes students made and if any rearranged the order of events.
Lesson 14: Peer Revision of Multi-scene Stories

Standards
9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Objectives
SWBAT provide positive and critical feedback to peers’ writing
SWBAT makes positive changes to their writing based on peer feedback

Materials
Critical Friend Student Handout (1 per student in laminated covers)
Critical Friends Student Worksheet (1 per student)

Instruction
1) Divide class into groups of 3-4 students (2 minutes)
2) Review protocol with students (5 minutes)
   a) It can be helpful to emphasize a particular writing skill depending on the writing assignment and prior mini lessons
      i) Example: focus on strong topic sentences, elaborating on evidence, logical order of ideas, etc.
   b) Remind students that this step is revision not editing. Perpetual grammar or punctuation mistakes and be noted, but not every error should be fixed.
3) Perform protocol in small groups (40 minutes)
   a) Groups of 3 students should take up to 10 minutes per writing piece with 2 minutes to transition. Groups of 4 students should take up to 8 minutes per writing piece with 2 minutes to transition
   b) The teacher should visit student groups, asking probing questions about feedback and making sure that the students talk with each other and not directly to the writer.
4) Summarize and explain next steps (5 minutes)
   a) A helpful closure could be to ask 3 students about elements they will improve during their revision.

Assessment
1) Teacher observation of student discussion (formative)
   a) Are students discussing with each other or directly to the writer?
   b) Are students able to notice areas for revision or do they focus on editing mistakes?
2) Critical Friends Worksheet (turned in with final draft after revision process—summative)
   a) What kind of notes did students take?
   b) Did students use feedback to make changes to their final draft?
Lesson 15: Full Writing Workshop Day

Standards
9.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

9.7.5.5 Use a writing process to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Objectives
(Ongoing and culminating today) SWBAT write a multiscene story with at least one well-developed character

Materials
Writing materials and/or computers

Instruction
1. Introduction (5 min)
   a. Inform students that today will be a full writing workshop day. Students should spend the entire time finishing their Multi-scene Stories. If they finish early, they can either help a peer with editing or they can read to themselves.
   b. Provide a Best Draft Checklist to make sure student’s best drafts contain all the necessary elements of the project.
2. Writing and Student Conference Time (45 min)
   a. Be sure to check in with students who may need extra support in order to complete their best drafts.
3. Closure (5 min)
   a. Remind students to complete and upload their best drafts by the following class

Assessment
1. Student Conferences (formative)
   a. Informally observe which students need more support and what kind of writing errors are being made
2. Multi-scene Story (Summative)
   a. Formally assess student using the project rubric
APPENDIX D

Selected Curriculum Materials

One Sentence Stories
100-word Memoir Assignment
Exploding a Moment Practice Worksheet
Student Revision Example #1
Dialogue Rules Handout
Detailed Scene Assignment Description
Comma Detective Work Handout
Shape of Stories Hanout
8 Ways to Develop Character
Multi-scene Story Assignment Description
Student Revision Example #2
Narrative Unit Slideshow
One-sentence Stories

Words will be cut up for students to rearrange into their own one-sentence stories.

Epitaph: He shouldn't have fed it.


He read his obituary with confusion.

With bloody hands, I say good-bye.

From torched skyscrapers, men grew wings.

Machine. Unexpectedly, I'd invented a time


Original Stories

Epitaph: He shouldn't have fed it. - Brian Herbert

Leia: "Baby's yours." Luke: "Bad news..." - Steven Meretzky

He read his obituary with confusion. - Steven Meretzky
With bloody hands, I say good-bye. - *Frank Miller*

From torched skyscrapers, men grew wings. - *Gregory Maguire*

Machine. Unexpectedly, I’d invented a time - *Alan Moore*

Longed for him. Got him. Shoot. - *Margaret Atwood*
100-word Memoir Assignment

Task
- In no more than 100 words, tell a brief story of something that has happened to you.

Focus On using descriptive language to make your story engaging.

Assessment
- 15 points/ formative
- Quality work will explain an event that actually happened to you, use descriptive language, and use proper grammar and punctuation.

Example:
Briiiiiiiiiing! The school bell marked our exit. I rushed onto my bus, wishing I could will the bus driver into driving faster. Bursting through the door, I raced to the shared computer.

Today I needed to be first. A few clicks and that all too familiar dial-up buzz as the warm glow of AOL Instant Messenger illuminated my face. Today, I would enter the world of adulthood.

Today, I would claim my own identity. Today, I would decide on my username. I deliberately typed in each letter: a-d-(dash)-s-m-a-r-t. I felt so unique and clever as I finished the job by hitting enter…”This username has already been taken. Please choose another.”
Exploding a Moment Practice

Directions:

Choose one of the statements below and expand it by using sensory description (sight, smell, taste, feel, sound) to make it seem like you’ve slowed down time.

- Kiki dropped the plate.
- Ori tripped and fell on the ground.
- Sasha threw the ball into the basket.
- Micah watched the sun set over the hill.

______________________________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________________________
1. Dialogue tags and dialogue should be separated by punctuation, usually a comma.
   a. Abdul said, “How many days till summer break?”

2. Dialogue that would end in a period should end in a comma if a dialogue tag comes right after. ?s and !s stay.

3. Punctuation at the end of dialogue will always go inside quotation marks.

4. Dialogue that follows a tag is a complete sentence that needs a capital letter at the beginning.
   a. Salaha yelled, “Let’s go get ice cream!”

5. A new paragraph has to start after each new speaker.
   Ben looked at Bruno. “Do you want anything from the store?” he said.
   “No, I’ll be ok,” responded Bruno.

6. Dialogue tags aren’t necessary if it’s clear who’s speaking.

7. Dialogue tags can interrupt dialogue. Rule #4 doesn’t apply for the continued dialogue, but all other rules apply.
   a. “Well,” said Shayari, “let’s wait ten more minutes.”
   b. “Wow!” proclaimed Abed, “I never thought I’d see you again.”
Detailed Scene Assignment
Summative Assessment

Task
Create a single narrative scene that engages the reader into the work through descriptive language, character dialogue, precise words, and smooth flow. Your scene may be anywhere from 1-2 pages.

What to write about?
You may choose any kind of scene to write. It could be based on real life or completely fictitious. It could be the introduction to a character or story, or it could be in the middle of a story.

Your work does not need to be a complete story. Instead, use your skills of “exploding a moment” to slow down time and be as descriptive as possible about one particular event. Use your writing from our daily writing prompts as starting points.

Descriptors of Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Word choice</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages reader into a problem, situation, observation, point of view or introduction of narrator</td>
<td>Uses dialogue, pacing, and description to develop character, situation, or event</td>
<td>Creates a coherent whole through a smooth progression</td>
<td>Uses precise words and phrases to share details and sensory information</td>
<td>Uses polished grammar and sentence structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/5 /5 /5 /5 /5/25
Kim’s Initial Draft of “My Hands”

People have always complimented my “candle like” fingers and the smoothness of my palms. Normally if you’re filipino you have stubby fingers and rough skin. However, for me, my hands are the opposite which I take pride in. Throughout my life so far, my hands have held, high fived, waved, touched and shook many things. They allowed me to start new passions and hobbies such as photography, cooking, and tennis. And yet, there was one time in my life that I had hated. It was back in fifth grade, almost 3 more days until summer, when I had used my hands to hurt another person. One of my closest friends had been pestering me and chose to use his hands to draw on my shirt with a marker. My annoyance and rage had consumed me clear thought, thus influencing me write some rude words on my video game...

Kim’s Narrative Writing Revision (a revisit of the same prompt with a different story)

“Line up against the wall!” ordered Ms. Loper. “Who wrote this?”

Five sweaty hands shot up in the air, mine being one of them.

It was the last day until winter break, and the whole 6th grade class was allowed to have a “game day.” This meant that we could bring our video games from home and have a carefree day full of fun, and most importantly, no school work. Like the rest of my hyperactive classmates, drunk on the sugar running through our veins from soda and candies given to us, I had brought my very own Nintendo DS.

“Kim hurry up! Join our chat room,” said my friend Andres.

I could have said “no thanks” or “maybe later,” but I quickly accepted the invitation thus binding my fate with a terrifying trip into the vice principal's office. One word, four letters, was all it took for me to feel like a criminal. Had I not foolishly typed and sent one message, I could have escaped the clutches of disappointment and embarrassment. Have you guessed it yet? I'll give you a hint: it rhymes with the word duck.

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Detective Work
Comma Rule #1

Task:
By observing the examples, try to figure out the rule for how to use a comma in this situation.
- Write the rule in your notebook, and be ready to share with the class
- Bolded words are a hint

Correct Examples- each sentence uses a comma appropriately

If we have ten people show up, we can all have Punch.

Since last Saturday was our meeting, we won’t meet for three weeks.

Although parrots are beautiful, they are too loud house pets.

While I was sleeping, tiny green monsters baked a pie in my oven.

Since the inception of our book club, Thursdays have become my favorite day of the week.

Even though Sparky has been to the dog park, he still has a lot of energy.

Non Examples (each sentence does not need a comma, bolded words are for emphasis)

Abdul went to see the movie even though he’s seen it five times already.

Trixie ate a huge cake last night because it was her birthday.

Adam loves corgis which makes perfect sense.

Danny writes poetry although he doesn’t have much time to write it.

Minneapolis is a major city even though it isn’t that big of a city.
Detective work
Comma Rule #2

Task:
By observing the examples and non-examples, try to figure out the rule for how to use a comma in this situation.
- Write the rule in your notebook, and be ready to share with the class
- Bolded words are a hint

Examples:
Terry’s favorite food is Italian food, and he eats it every day.

Great River School is technically a charter school, but it is also a public school.

The journalist took three weeks to write her article, for it was an in-depth piece that took a lot of research.

The play Hamlet is either about madness, or it is a play about getting back at those who do you wrong.

I already took out the garbage, yet the smell has remained in the room.

The explosions in Transformers 4 didn’t entertain me at all, for each explosion looked fake and hokey.

Non-Examples (These examples do not need a comma):

Mondays have become the worst since the day I started my new job.

The birds will all leave when the temperature drops.

I’ve never liked scary movies though musicals are worse
The Shapes of Stories
by Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut gained worldwide fame and adoration through the publication of his novels, including *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Cat's Cradle*, *Breakfast of Champions*, and more.

But it was his rejected master's thesis in anthropology that he called his prettiest contribution to his culture.

The basic idea of his thesis was that a story's main character has ups and downs that can be graphed to reveal the story's shape.

The shape of a society's stories, he said, is at least as interesting as the shape of its pots or spearheads. Let's have a look.

Designer: Maya Eilam, www.mayaeilam.com
Sources: A Man without a Country and Psalm Sunday by Kurt Vonnegut

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**Man in Hole**
The main character gets into trouble then gets out of it again and ends up better off for the experience.
- *Arsenic and Old Lace*
- *Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle*

**Boy Meets Girl**
The main character comes across something wonderful, gets it, loses it, then gets it back forever.
- *Jane Eyre*
- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

**From Bad to Worse**
The main character starts off poorly then gets continually worse with no hope for improvement.
- *The Metamorphosis*
- *The Twilight Zone*

**Which Way Is Up?**
The story has a lifelike ambiguity that keeps us from knowing if new developments are good or bad.
- *Hamlet*
- *The Sopranos*

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**Creation Story**
In many cultures' creation stories, humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity. First major staples like the earth and sky, then smaller things like sparrows and cell phones. Not a common shape for Western stories, however.
- *Great Expectations*

**Old Testament**
Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, but is suddenly ousted from good standing in a fall of enormous proportions.
- *Great Expectations with Dickens' alternate ending*

**New Testament**
Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, is suddenly ousted from good standing, but then receives off-the-charts bliss.
- *Great Expectations*

**Cinderella**
It was the similarity between the shapes of Cinderella and the New Testament that thrilled Vonnegut for the first time in 1947 and then over the course of his life as he continued to write essays and give lectures on the shapes of stories.
Eight Ways to Reveal Character
by Dewey Hensley

1. Actions

As Kevin moved down the street his feet made a steady echo sound against the pavement. He whistled despite the loud rumble of the traffic and the car horns. When someone yelled out the window of his or her car to watch where he was going, he just waved back like he was watching a best friend heading home. He passed by the garbage on the sidewalk and the old woman pushing the shopping cart filled with newspaper, and continued to smile as he headed toward Cindy’s house. Nothing could erase that smile from his face, not even the coldness of the streets he called home.

2. Dialogue

“I ain’t gonna leave you here, Ma’am . . . not with you needin’ help and all,” Jimmy said as he walked back to his truck to get the jack. “I’d help anybody who needed it; my momma taught me better’en to just leave people. The good Lord’ll make it up to me.” “I don’t know . . .,” Linda stuttered. She had barely rolled down her window to hear Jimmy when he had left his pick-up truck and offered help. “You know what they say about your kind . . .”

3. Physical Description

Other guys walking through the hallway were taller and even more handsome, but there was something about Billy Belaire. His arms swung loose at his side and his dark hair was long and pulled back behind his head, held by a rubber band. The dark jacket he wore was straight out of the local thrift shop, she could tell, but the way he wore it suggested a sense of pride, or at least a lack of caring what others thought about him.

4. Idiosyncrasies

Junior tapped his fingertips against the table and looked at his watch constantly. His leg bounced up and down and he gulped the hot coffee as if it would hurry up his friend’s arrival.
5. Objects/Possessions

Michael touched the locket around his neck and rolled it between his fingers. His mother had given him that locket, with her picture inside, when he had left to live with his father. What would she think of him now?

6. Reactions

Tony’s words stung Laura. It wasn’t what she expected to hear. They had been dating for over a month now, how could he do this to her? How could he break her heart? All three of their dates had been fun; he had said so himself. As Tony watched the floodgate of her eyes begin to open he looked at his watch. Jeez, I hope I can make it to the gym on time.

7. Thoughts

He began to remember when he was a freshman in high school. The seniors really thought they were something back then, always trying to play their little pranks on the ninth graders. He knew at that moment he couldn’t be one of those kinds of people. He walked over to Jeff and Larry to tell them it was time to stop.

8. Background Information

Miles knew what it meant to be alone. When he was a child growing up his father had been in the military. They had traveled from Florida, to Georgia, to California, to Kentucky. He had rarely had a friend for very long. By the leap from California he had already decided having friends was a risk; the fewer the friends, the easier it was to leave. This philosophy had made him a real outsider at Glenview High School. In the six months he had been there he had not really made a single friend but as he stood there staring at Sheila, he realized that just might have to change.
Multi-scene Story Assignment
Summative Assessment

Task
Build on our previous task of developing a single scene by creating a story that uses multiple scenes. Your story may be as simple as having a beginning, middle, end or it may be more complex with flashbacks, flashforward, starting in the middle (in media res), or multiple narrators. Your story may be anywhere from 2-8 pages.

What to Write About?
As before, your story may be based on actual events or completely fictitious. Use your writing notebook as a starting point for a story idea or you can build on your single scene from the previous assignment.

1st Draft Due (printed or digital)__________________________________________

Best Draft Due_____________________________________________________

Descriptors of Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Word choice</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages reader with a problem, situation, observation, point of view or introduction of narrator</td>
<td>Uses dialogue, pacing, and description to develop character, situation, or event</td>
<td>Creates a coherent whole through a smooth progression</td>
<td>Uses precise words and phrases to share details and sensory information</td>
<td>Uses polished grammar and sentence structure</td>
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__________________________________________/25
Skipping A Heart Beat- Draft 1

Student Example

My heart skipped a beat as my oldest brother, Angel, told me in a log and gloomy voice, “Jimena, our dog is gone.” My face turned pale, my eyes were watery, my heart was beating so fast I felt it would rise up to my throat, and my hands were wet. All this was happening as I stood on the steps of the backyard, staring at my brother.

My brother and I assumed the cause for the whole incident was the backyard door my father had been fixing the previous day. The door was white with brown scratches and had rusty old hinges that would not allow the door to close. However, the electricity man did not know of this and when leaving the backyard he probably pushed the door without looking. He did not notice the door had not closed and to do so you had to lift it and then lock it into position. Thus, my curious, little, white, and brown shih-tzu ran out into the street until reaching my elementary school.

After the bell rang that indicated that the upper grades were able to go home I walked past a group of kids who huddled around an unknown figure. Little did I pay attention and headed home. Then and there, my brother announced what had happened to Guapo. I ran back and forth through the yard in disbelief. My dog had to be here!

Afterwards, my brother commanded me to ask my baby-sitter to watch over me that afternoon, I approached her as she walked with her granddaughter from school. She was an old lady with curly brown hair and long dresses. They stopped and said hello.

“Can you take care of me today?” I asked.

“Yes, I can,” she replied.

Then I noticed she was carrying a dog, but hers was visible from her house door. There was a nappy sensation that filled me as I saw the dog. “Nana, that’s that dog!”

Skipping a Heart Beat- Draft 2

Student Example

“Jimena, out dog...Guapo...he is...gone.” My heart skipped a beat as my older brother, Angel, painfully stuttered those words. My face lost all color. Tears obstructed my vision, and my hands were as wet as a fish. My dog, my precious little dog was gone.

All it took was a man and one useless white gate with brown scratches and old corroded hinges to lose my dog. My father had attempted to repair it the previous day, but was incapable of doing so due to duties of greater importance. The gate would not close unless one lifted and locked it into position. However, the man who examined the electricity box that day did not know of this. When he left, the gate was ajar, thus presenting freedom to my curious Shitzu who must have run past the street and into the elementary school yard.

Moments before knowing of the incident, the bell rang, indicating that upper grades were allowed to go home, and I walked past kids who were clustered together around an animal.
paid little attention to it and walked home. Once entering my silent home, my brother announced the horrid event regarding Guapo. I searched the entire yard in disbelief. “My dog has to be here!”

Later, my brother ordered me to see if Nana could watch over me that afternoon because he needed to go to work and no one else would be home. My parents often relied on her to take care of me. Nana was an elderly woman and a smoker which made her voice raspy. I approached her as she walked with her granddaughter from the elementary I attended. They stopped and looked, perplexed by my melancholy expression, but they smiled pleasantly.

“Can you take care of me today? My brother has to…”

Then I noticed that Nana held a dog in her arms. But it wasn’t her dog, the one who always lazily sunbathes in her yard. I was filled with happiness!

“Nana, that’s my dog!”
Short Stories

Writing Prompt

1) What makes a story good?
Short Story Unit

By the end of this unit you will:

1) Create a 100 word memoir (formative)
2) Create a zoomed in scene (summative)
3) Create a multi-scene narrative (summative)

In order to get there, we will:

- Read and learn about new authors each week
- Learn and practice different skills related to writing stories
- Discuss stories

What is a narrative?
What is a narrative?

The telling of a story

The “Story” contains the actual events. A narrative may skip over or focus in on specific events for emphasis.

- Oral
- Written
- Digital

Is this a narrative? Why or why not?

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

- Attributed to Ernest Hemingway
Create a narrative!

Directions:
As a base group, use the cut out words to create one or more stories.
Write your stories on a separate sheet so that Adam can reuse the cutouts.

One Sentence Stories

Epitaph:  He shouldn't have fed it.
He read his obituary with confusion.
With bloody hands, I say good-bye.
From torched skyscrapers, men grew wings.
Machine. Unexpectedly, I'd invented a time
100-word Memoir

Writing Prompt (5 min + Share)

1. Write about a time where something really funny happened to you
2. Write about a time where something scary happened to you
3. Write about a time when you found something you had lost forever
4. Write about an experience when your understanding of a person changed
Descriptive Language

Writing Prompt

Draw an outline of your hand and answer one of the prompts inside the outline of their hand

1. You’re digging through your backpack, you get to the very bottom and it’s then that you feel it... describe what you feel.
2. It’s dark outside. You’ve dropped a coin and you’re trying to pick it up when suddenly you feel it... describe what you feel.
3. You’re walking through your kitchen without shoes until suddenly you feel it... describe what you feel beneath your foot.
Prompt

Imagine you were a character in this scene. Describe your 5 senses.

What do you see, hear, feel, taste, smell?
Example of “Exploding a Moment”

“It was scary shooting a gun for the first time, and I kept missing. I’m a terrible shot.”

“I push my family from my mind, set my feet shoulder-width apart, and delicately wrap both hands around the handle of the gun. It’s heavy and hard to lift away from my body, but I want it to be as far from my face as possible. I squeeze the trigger, hesitantly at first and then harder, cringing away from the gun. The sound hurts my ears and the recoil ... sends my hands back, toward my nose. I stumble, pressing my hand to the wall behind me for balance. I don’t know where my bullet went, but I know it’s not near the target. I fire again and again and again, and none of the bullets come close” (78).

From Divergent by Veronica Roth (2011)
Dialogue

Writing Prompt

1) If you have a phone, tell the story of how you got it and how it felt
2) Tell a story of when a phone really helped you out
3) Tell a story of when a phone was a problem
S.T.A.R. Revision

Writing Prompt

1. Write about a funeral
2. Write about a party
Comma Rules
Prompt

Imagine you were a character in this scene. Describe your 5 senses.

What do you see, hear, feel, taste, smell?

Story Shapes
Writing Prompt- Choose a character and write about them.

1. What are they like?
2. What is something they want?
3. What is a problem they need solving?
4. Where are they going today, what issues will they run into?
8 Ways to Build Character

Writing Prompt

For Old Friends, Hospital Work Brings New Challenges During COVID-19
Sam Dow and Josh Belsaer

1. What does duty mean to you?
2. What does sacrifice mean to you?
Mentor Text

Writing Prompt

Write from the perspective of an object or animal
Revising
Organization

Warm Up- Stand, Share, Sit

1. Stand around your table
2. Choose a question and share one at a time
   a. What is going well with your writing so far?
   b. What could improve with your writing?
   c. What is something you’ve learned in this unit so far?
3. Sit down once you are done sharing