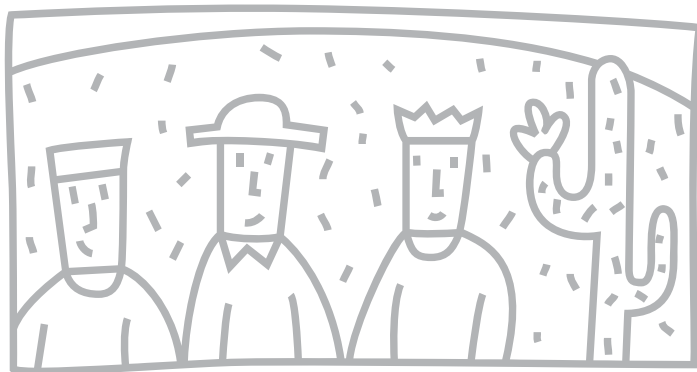


Assessing Writers

**“FULL”
VERSION**



Assessing Writing

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by Steve Peha



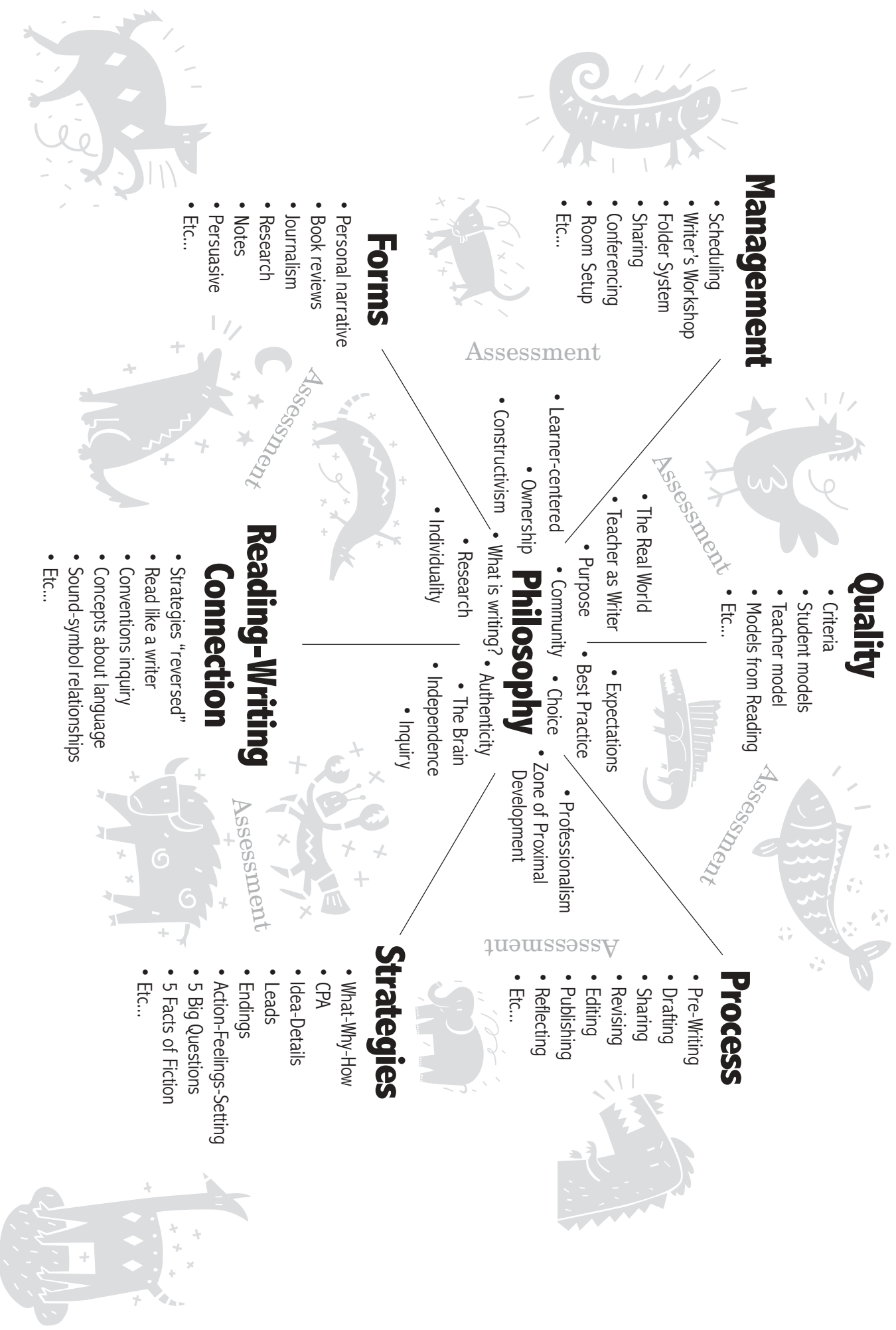
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"Every study of young writers I've done for the last twenty years has underestimated what they can do. In fact, we know very little about the human potential for writing."

—Donald Graves, *A Fresh Look at Writing* (p.99)

Writing Instruction That Makes Sense



What is Best Practice Writing Instruction?

Writing is very important in education today so everyone wants to know the best way to teach it. But that can be a challenge because there are so many different ideas out there. Fortunately, in the last decade, a national consensus has emerged regarding the essential elements of successful instruction. In the book *Best Practice: New Standards For Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*, written by Harvey Daniels, Steve Zemelman, and Arthur Hyde (2nd edition, 1999, published by Heinemann), the path to effective writing instruction is defined as follows:

Increase student ownership and responsibility by: helping students choose their own topics and goals for improvement; using brief teacher-student conferences; teaching students to review their own progress.	Decrease teacher control of decision making by: teacher deciding on all writing topics; suggestions for improvement dictated by teacher; learning objectives determined by teacher alone; instruction given as whole-class activity.
Increase class time spent on writing whole, original pieces through: establishing real purposes for writing and student involvement in the task; instruction in and support for all stages of the writing process.	Decrease time spent on isolated drills on "subskills" of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, paragraphing, penmanship, etc.
Increase teacher modeling writing as a fellow author and as a demonstration of processes.	Decrease teacher talks about writing but never writes or shares own work.
Increase learning of grammar and mechanics in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed.	Decrease isolated grammar lessons, given in order determined by textbook, before writing is begun.
Increase writing for real audiences, publishing for the class and for wider communities.	Decrease assignments read only by the teacher.
Increase making the classroom a supportive setting for shared learning, using: active exchange and valuing of students ideas; collaborative small-group work; conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility for improvement to authors.	Decrease devaluation of students ideas through: students viewed as lacking knowledge and language abilities; sense of class as competing individuals; work with fellow students viewed as cheating or disruptive.
Increase writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning.	Decrease writing taught only during "language arts" period—i.e., infrequently.
Increase constructive and efficient evaluation that involves: brief informal oral responses as students work; thorough grading of just a few student-selected, polished pieces; focus on a few errors at a time; cumulative view of growth and self-evaluation; encouragement of risk taking and honest expression.	Decrease evaluation as negative burden for teacher and student by: marking all papers heavily for errors, making teacher a bottleneck; teacher editing paper, and only after completed, rather than student making improvements; grading seen as punitive, focused on errors, not growth.

The message of best practice is clear: the more we apply proven principles of successful teaching, the more engaged our students will be in successful learning. This is a gradual process that unfolds over time. Teachers proceed on a continuum of development just like their students. With ongoing exposure to effective teaching methods through high quality in-service training and consistent administrative leadership that supports and validates contemporary instruction, teachers gradually replace less successful approaches with proven techniques that maximize student achievement.

Since the early 1990s when the best practice movement in American education began to take shape, thousands of teachers and administrators have begun the process of making research-based instruction an integral part of their schools. There is already a large best practice community in our country and many resources to help teachers make the transition. In the face of increasing pressure to improve student learning, everyone is looking for solutions. Best practice defines those solutions and provides for us the most logical and responsible path we can take.

How Do Teachers Achieve Best Practice?

Learning about best practice is vital but it's only the beginning. Knowing what best practice is helps us define where we want our teaching to end up. But it doesn't necessarily tell us how to get there. In our work, we have found that teachers achieve best practice when they concentrate their efforts on the following six instructional areas:

Writer's Workshop

A system for classroom management and the development of an effective writing community.

Focused mini-lessons taught in the context of authentic writing; status of the class; the majority of class time reserved for writing; conferencing; sharing; students choosing their own topics and forms; emphasis on authentic audiences and purposeful communication; writer's notebooks; frequent teacher modeling; five days a week, 45-60 minutes per day at elementary, three days a week at secondary; etc.

Writing Process

Teaching students how to write the way real writers write.

Pre-writing to develop ideas; drafting to increase fluency and expression; sharing to get feedback; revision to apply feedback; editing to produce conventional writing; publishing to make work available with others (twice a month on average); assessing to understand strengths and weaknesses and determine goals for improvement.

Writing Strategies

Reliable, re-usable techniques that help writers solve common problems.

Topic T-Chart; What-Why-How; Idea-Details; Tell-Show; Transition-Action-Details; Draw-Label-Caption; Action-Feelings-Setting; Content-Purpose-Audience; The Five Big Questions; The Five Facts of Fiction; lead strategies; ending strategies; pacing strategies, transition strategies, sentence strategies, conventions strategies; etc.

Six Traits

A language of quality that defines good writing.

Ideas: main idea, details, showing, purpose, originality; Organization: leads, endings, transitions, pacing, sequencing; Voice: personality, style, respect for audience; honesty; control; Word Choice: strong verbs, specific nouns and modifiers, appropriate vocabulary, memorable phrases, grammar and usage; Sentence Fluency: length, beginnings, sound, expression, construction; Conventions: capitalization, ending punctuation, internal punctuation, paragraphing, spelling.

Authentic Forms

Helping students explore and master the kinds of writing done by real people in the real world.

The creation of whole pieces that match as closely as possible the same types of writing done by adults; Primary emphasis on the personal essay (narrative, expository, persuasive) as the foundation of all writing; informational writing, reviews; letters; newspaper and magazine journalism; secondary emphasis on career-related forms such as technical writing, business writing, proposals, etc.; Occasional work on fiction, poetry, drama; etc.

Reading-Writing Connection

Helping students internalize reading and writing as complimentary aspects of literate communication.

Writing strategies used in "reverse" as comprehension strategies; analyzing reading texts for writing techniques; Explicit training in expressive reading to improve understanding of conventions; Conventions reading; Studying the same forms in reading that we want students to write; Reading and evaluating the writing of other students; etc.

In addition to dramatic improvements in test scores, teachers who have based the development of their own writing programs on the model presented here note the following advantages over the traditional approaches they used in the past: (1) Students enjoy writing; (2) Students write significantly more; (3) Low students often make as much progress as high students; (4) Students work independently with significantly greater on-task performance; (5) The burden of correcting and grading is reduced significantly; (6) Parents are thrilled; (7) Overall literacy improves across a broad range of reading, writing, and thinking skills; (8) Students gain confidence; (9) Students demonstrate more accountability and demonstrate greater effort; (10) Success in writing carries over into other subjects; (11) Student behavior improves making the classroom easier to manage; (12) Students enjoy school more.

What Do I Look For in Writing?

1. Quality

What is good writing? What does it look like? How can we describe it in words? What criteria do we use to say that some pieces are better than others? How do we justify our judgments and support our analyses?

The goal of this area of the writing curriculum is to provide students with an effective vocabulary that matches real world standards for appreciating the quality of a piece of writing and identifying opportunities for improvement.

1.1 General

- ☐ Uses a shared language of quality to express judgments in ways that others understand.
- ☐ Knows that different quality standards apply in different situations.
- ☐ Knows that some traits are more important than others.
- ☐ Knows that some traits are more important in some forms.
- ☐ Understands how the traits interact, knows that strengths and weaknesses in one trait may be linked with other traits.
- ☐ Knows that Voice is the most important trait.
- ☐ Knows that, in general, the communication of ideas is more important than correctness, but also understands community values with regard to conventions and strives to meet this standard.
- ☐ Knows that success in all traits is required in order to produce successful writing.

1.2 Ideas

- ☐ Defines and develops an important main idea.
- ☐ Supports ideas with interesting and relevant details.
- ☐ Uses "showing" or "descriptive" detail effectively.
- ☐ Produces writing that demonstrates a clear and consistent sense of purpose.
- ☐ Occasionally includes something unusual or unexpected that is appropriate and effective.
- ☐ Produces writing that displays insight, knowledge, experience, and depth of thought.
- ☐ Produces writing that makes sense.
- ☐ Values the meaning of ideas over organizational structure.

1.3 Organization

- ☐ Chooses organizational structure based on structure of own ideas.
- ☐ Uses authentic organizational structures, avoids inauthentic "recipe" and "fill-in" approaches.
- ☐ Creates effective beginnings that catch the audience's attention and make them want to read more.
- ☐ Creates effective endings that feel finished and give the audience something to think about.
- ☐ Determines sequencing based on the logical progression of ideas and the needs of the audience.
- ☐ Paces writing effectively, spends the right amount of time on each part.
- ☐ Produces writing that is easy to follow from section to section.

1.4 Voice

- ☐ Chooses own topics.
- ☐ Cares about own writing.
- ☐ Takes ownership of own writing.
- ☐ Writes in ways that make readers care.
- ☐ Respects the needs of the audience.
- ☐ Writes with honest statements and strong feelings.
- ☐ Shows own personality in appropriate ways.
- ☐ Writes with energy under thoughtful control.
- ☐ Uses humor appropriately.
- ☐ Takes risks with writing that lead to new learning.
- ☐ Demonstrates an understanding of the connection between Voice and choice.
- ☐ Consistently asserts personal preferences in ways that make own writing more effective.
- ☐ Produces writing that shows evidence of originality and uniqueness.
- ☐ Attempts to develop and assert a personal writing style.
- ☐ Asserts individuality in ways that are valued by the community.
- ☐ Constructively resists conformity when it is inconsistent with personal values.

1.5 Word Choice

- ___ Uses language that is appropriate to content, purpose, audience, and form.
- ___ Uses strong verbs effectively.
- ___ Writes with specific and precise adverbs and adjectives.
- ___ Produces writing that includes memorable words and phrases.
- ___ Demonstrates effective usage.
- ___ Uses appropriate grammar.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of the difference in vocabulary between formal and informal writing.
- ___ Knows the meanings of words used including connotative meanings.
- ___ Uses colloquial language effectively and appropriately.
- ___ Engages in word play.
- ___ Demonstrates a basic understanding of etymology.

1.6 Sentence Fluency

- ___ Reads own writing with expression.
- ___ Displays effective variety in sentence beginnings.
- ___ Displays effective variety in sentence lengths.
- ___ Produces writing that is easy to read expressively.
- ___ Uses rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and other "sound" effects appropriately.
- ___ Constructs sentences in ways that make them easy to understand.
- ___ Modifies sentence structure for audience.
- ___ Uses fragments effectively.

1.7 Conventions

- ___ Applies conventions in ways that makes sense to the audience.
- ___ Alters writing conventions appropriately according to content, purpose, audience, and form.
- ___ Understands the vocabulary of writing conventions and uses terms appropriately.
- ___ Knows that conventions are not hard and fast rules but agreements within communities and that these agreements change from time to time.
- ___ Knows that specific rules are determined by publishers who follow a particular "style" that may, in some respects, be unique to their particular publications.
- ___ Uses capitalization to indicate where new ideas begin; capitalizes the word "I" as well as names, places, and things that are one of a kind.
- ___ Uses marks of terminal punctuation—periods, question marks, and exclamation marks—to indicate the ends of statements, questions, and exclamatory remarks.

- ___ Uses marks of internal punctuation—commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, and parentheses—to improve readability and enhance meaning by indicating clause boundaries and logical relationships.
- ___ Uses apostrophes to indicate possession and contractions.
- ___ Uses quotation marks to indicate dialog, to indicate an uncommon use of a word or phrase, and to signal irony.
- ___ Uses the ellipsis to indicate that text is missing or that something repeats indefinitely.
- ___ Uses paragraphs to indicate groups of related ideas and to signal a new speaker when writing dialog; indents or skips a line between paragraphs according to appropriate style.
- ___ Uses hyphens to indicate the breaking of a word, at a syllable boundary, that is continued on the next line.
- ___ Spells words correctly as defined by audience or publisher's style.

1.8 Presentation

- ___ Produces legible writing.
- ___ Produces work that is visually appealing.
- ___ Uses appropriate letter formation, size, slant, and spacing.
- ___ Stays on the lines.
- ___ Uses appropriate margins.
- ___ Uses appropriate fonts and other computer formatting.
- ___ Uses layout techniques that increase readability and visual appeal.
- ___ Uses effective illustrations and other visual components such as diagrams, tables, charts, photographs, etc.

2. Process

How do writers write? What stages do they go through to turn raw ideas into polished pieces? What do writers attempt to accomplish at each stage? How do writers develop and refine their own writing process?

The goal of this part of the writing curriculum is to help students develop an effective and reliable process for creating finished pieces.

2.1 General

- ___ Knows the stages of the "generic" writing process—pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing.
- ___ Understands the purpose of each stage in the writing process.
- ___ Understands the cyclical nature of the writing process.
- ___ Develops and uses own writing process.
- ___ Demonstrates an appreciation of or tolerance for the writing processes of others.

2.2 Pre-writing

- ___ Pre-writes when necessary.
- ___ Uses a variety of pre-writing strategies.
- ___ Selects appropriate pre-writing strategies for specific situations.
- ___ Saves pre-writing materials for use at other times.
- ___ Develops own pre-writing strategies.
- ___ Saves pre-writing material for later use.
- ___ Devotes an appropriate amount of time to pre-writing.

2.3 Drafting

- ___ Skips spaces between lines to facilitate easier revision when writing by hand.
- ___ Makes use of pre-writing to generate material.
- ___ Attends to conventions as they arise in accordance with ability but does not let correctness impact fluency.
- ___ Writes fluently for sustained periods of time with reasonable production.
- ___ Handles writer's block effectively.
- ___ Expresses self freely and unselfconsciously.
- ___ Puts thoughts into words comfortably and naturally.
- ___ Demonstrates a willingness to take risks.
- ___ Writes until ideas are thoroughly expressed, not for word or page counts, arbitrary periods of time, or other quantitative measures.

2.4 Sharing

- ___ Shares regularly at all stages of the writing process.
- ___ Acknowledges feedback.
- ___ Understands feedback, asks for clarification or elaboration when confused.
- ___ Asks audience for specific help when sharing.
- ___ Shares parts of a piece when the whole might be too long.
- ___ Gives other writers an equal opportunity to share.
- ___ Allows another writer or the teacher to share own writing when unwilling or unable to read own work.
- ___ Reads own work with confidence in a loud, clear, and pleasant manner.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of the value of sharing to self, others, and the writing community as a whole.

2.5 Revising

- ___ Uses specific revision strategies to solve common problems.
- ___ Regularly revises beginnings and endings.
- ___ Applies feedback from sharing to improve writing; makes good decisions about when and when not to apply feedback.
- ___ Often makes more than one revision pass.
- ___ Revises to meet the needs of an authentic audience.
- ___ Adds material when needed based on own analysis or the requests of others.
- ___ Re-organizes material to improve sequencing.
- ___ Deletes material when it is unnecessary or when length requirements apply.
- ___ Spends more time in revision than in other stages.

2.6 Editing

- ☐ Finds own errors.
- ☐ Corrects own writing.
- ☐ Uses editing marks when necessary.
- ☐ Helps other writers edit their writing.
- ☐ Asks for specific help with specific conventions.
- ☐ Finds and fixes one type of error at a time when engaged in formal proofreading.
- ☐ Makes several "passes" over a piece to insure correctness.
- ☐ Asks others to review own writing for correctness, accepts feedback and applies it.
- ☐ Expends reasonable effort to make writing as correct as it can be using all available resources and strategies.

2.7 Publishing

- ☐ Publishes writing regularly.
- ☐ Produces finished pieces with legible handwriting.
- ☐ Illustrates work when appropriate using drawings, photographs, graphics, artwork, etc.
- ☐ Types and formats own writing using a computer or typewriter.
- ☐ Keeps a portfolio of work.
- ☐ Displays and/or distributes work for appreciation by others.
- ☐ Has some familiarity with desktop publishing, computer-aided slideshows, and web publishing.
- ☐ Submits finished work for formal publications like school or classroom newspapers, or for other situations like contests, admissions requirements, etc.
- ☐ Produces finished writing outside of school without being told to do so.
- ☐ Shows good judgment with regard to the publication of personal information and ideas others may find troubling or offensive.

2.8 Assessing

- ☐ Expresses judgments of quality using appropriate criteria.
- ☐ Produces written reflections about own writing.
- ☐ Assesses both process and product of own writing.
- ☐ Understands own writing process.
- ☐ Accurately assesses own writing and the writing of others.
- ☐ Understands own strengths and weaknesses.
- ☐ Sets goals for improvement
- ☐ Achieves most learning goals.
- ☐ Asks for specific help and uses it.
- ☐ Sees self as a writer.
- ☐ Understands how to improve or seeks to find out.
- ☐ Finds writing enjoyable and valuable.
- ☐ Focuses on growth and improvement over time rather than on the success or failure of a single piece.

3. Forms

What kinds of writing are most likely to help students become better writers? What kinds of writing should students practice occasionally in order to develop familiarity though perhaps not mastery? What kinds of writing exist in the world today? What kinds of writing are relevant and practical for each individual student?

The goal of this area of the writing curriculum is to expose students to the most common authentic forms of writing that exist in the world today and to help them develop competence in those forms that are most valuable to them.

Note: I recognize that this section could be very long as hundreds of forms of writing exist in the world and new forms continue to arise. In this draft, I have chosen to focus on those forms which I feel are essential for learning how to write and are beneficial to all students. New forms, and new learning goals, should be added as needed, especially with regard to authentic forms in subject areas outside of the Language Arts.

3.1 General

- ___ Uses a variety of authentic forms to express ideas, to demonstrate learning, and to clarify and formalize thinking.
- ___ Knows the difference between authentic and inauthentic forms.
- ___ Chooses own forms.
- ___ Expresses personal preferences about forms, has favorite forms.
- ___ Knows different forms have different requirements.
- ___ Can identify key elements that make one form different from another.
- ___ Has some familiarity with the history of some writing forms, knows that forms change over time in response to technology and culture.
- ___ Understands the connection between content, purpose, audience, and form.
- ___ Practices the forms that are mostly likely to improve own writing ability.
- ___ Focuses on those forms that are most relevant and valuable to own life.
- ___ Uses all modes of argument (narrative, expository, persuasive, descriptive) effectively, can mix and move between them effectively in the same piece.

3.2 Personal Narrative

- ___ Knows that personal narrative writing is the best form for improving writing skills and the basis for all other forms.
- ___ Writes accurately and honestly from own experience.
- ___ Draws connections in personal narrative writing between own experience and the experiences of others.
- ___ Interprets events, draws meaningful conclusions, explores life lessons.
- ___ Effectively explores own beliefs and world view in ways that others find entertaining and thought provoking.
- ___ Relates personal experiences naturally in ways the audience can appreciate.
- ___ Draws on a variety of experiences for material.

3.3 Informational and Expository

- ___ Selects own topics for research based on personal interest within the framework of the curriculum.
- ___ Produces writing with a clear and well-defined thesis.
- ___ Focuses on a narrowly defined topic area or small set of questions.
- ___ Knows how to develop good questions for study, pursues follow-up questions thoroughly.
- ___ Uses a variety of authentic sources such as: original documents, interviews, the experience of colleagues, personal experience, etc.
- ___ Constructs logical arguments that are sound, meaningful, and effective.
- ___ Supports conclusions with reasons and evidence.
- ___ Models informational writing after contemporary newspaper and magazine journalism.

3.4 Persuasive

- ___ Demonstrates strong belief in positions.
- ___ Understands the perspective of the audience.
- ___ Anticipates and handles all reasonable objections.
- ___ Argues respectfully.
- ___ Supports opinions with ample detail.
- ___ Asserts positions with clarity.
- ___ Uses credible and effective evidence to sustain arguments.
- ___ Demonstrates thoroughness by dealing with all relevant aspects of a given issue.
- ___ Occasionally succeeds in persuading some readers.

3.5 Book Reviews and Literary Criticism

- ___ Selects own texts to be reviewed.
- ___ Assesses the quality of the text.
- ___ Draws meaningful connections and comparisons within and across texts.
- ___ Summarizes effectively.
- ___ Offers thoughtful commentary and original insights based on thorough analysis.
- ___ Provides sufficient information to allow others to decide if they would like to read a text.
- ___ Sites sections of the text to support opinions.

3.6 Journaling

- ___ Uses journaling as an opportunity for personal reflection.
- ___ Uses journaling as a means of saving thoughts for use in other writings.
- ___ Uses journaling to record and track progress.
- ___ Uses journaling to increase fluency.

3.7 Correspondence

- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of the formal conventions of various kinds of correspondence.
- ___ Writes letters regularly, replies when written to.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of e-mail and instant message etiquette.
- ___ Writes letters of inquiry for research topics and other needs.
- ___ Writes letters to family and friends.
- ___ Writes letters to express opinions about school, community, and the world.
- ___ Writes "thank you" letters.
- ___ Demonstrates familiarity with common business correspondence.

3.8 Note Taking

- ___ Takes notes in ways that are useful at a later time.
- ___ Knows some specific note taking strategies.
- ___ Knows when and when not to take notes.
- ___ Shows good judgment about what and what not to write down.
- ___ Saves notes for later use.

3.9 Fiction

- ___ Occasionally attempts, but may not always finish, short fiction.
- ___ Demonstrates a familiarity with strategies for creating stories, developing characters, constructing plots, etc.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of how fiction works.
- ___ Demonstrates a knowledge of common sub-genres.
- ___ Uses information learned through the writing of fiction to improve ability to read fiction.
- ___ Attempts some of the common techniques used by professional fiction writers.

3.10 Test Writing

- ___ Knows how to write appropriately and effectively for tests.
- ___ Understands the criteria of the test and the process of how work will be scored.
- ___ Uses specific test taking strategies when necessary.
- ___ Knows that test writing is not the same as authentic writing, merely a genre of writing that is practiced only occasionally.

3.11 Other Forms

- ___ Has attempted the common forms of newspaper and magazine journalism—straight news, feature story, interview, commentary, editorial, etc.
- ___ Has attempted the commonly used authentic forms of writing in mathematics, the physical sciences, and the social sciences.
- ___ Has attempted to write poetry, songs, and drama.
- ___ Has attempted technical writing.
- ___ Has practiced writing college entrance essays or similar works produced for similar situations.
- ___ Has some familiarity with important business documents—business plan, request for proposal, invoice, job cost estimate, letter of complaint, memorandum, job offer, employment contract, etc.
- ___ Has written a resume.
- ___ Writes successfully in forms that match a personal interest but may not be taught in school: sports writing, travel writing, restaurant and movie reviews, spiritual writing, interactive writing, television and movie scripts, e-mail and instant messaging, etc.

4. Strategies

What is a writing strategy? What are the problems writers face and which strategies do writers use to solve them? Which strategies are most efficient and effective? Which strategies are best for which types of writing? What does it mean to think strategically about writing?

The goal of this area of the writing curriculum is to provide students with a large repertoire of reliable techniques for solving the common problems writers face and to expose students to the idea of thinking strategically about writing.

4.1 General

- ☐ Notices frequent problems and selects appropriate strategies for solving them.
- ☐ Develops a repertoire of strategies for elements in the criteria for quality, for each stage in the writing process, and for relevant forms.
- ☐ Uses a large repertoire of authentic and reliable strategies that can be used in a variety of writing situations.
- ☐ Chooses strategies to match genre, form, or mode of writing.
- ☐ Uses many strategies for selecting effective topics, knows what a good topic is.
- ☐ Uses at least one strategy for creating or refining a main idea, knows what a main idea is and how it functions in a piece of writing.
- ☐ Uses at least one strategy for identifying and clarifying purpose and writing toward that goal.
- ☐ Uses strategies for determining and meeting the needs of an audience.
- ☐ Uses strategies for determining when a piece is finished.
- ☐ Uses strategies for sounding out words independently.
- ☐ Uses many strategies for the creation of supporting details, knows what a detail is and how it functions in a piece of writing.
- ☐ Uses single strategies or strategy sets that are particularly effective for certain forms, genres, or modes of writing.
- ☐ Uses many strategies for creating effective beginnings, often tries several different beginnings for a piece.
- ☐ Uses many strategies for creating effective endings, often tries several different endings for a piece.
- ☐ Uses strategies to identify and correct errors in writing conventions.
- ☐ Uses strategies to determine the meaning or correct spelling of a word.
- ☐ Uses strategies for dealing with writer's block.
- ☐ Uses strategies for effective summarizing.
- ☐ Uses strategies for narrative sequencing and procedural writing.
- ☐ Develops own repertoire of personal strategies based on own writing process.
- ☐ Demonstrates an eagerness to learn new strategies.
- ☐ Thinks strategically about writing.

5. Community

What is a writing community? What value is there in working with other writers when learning to write? How do we create and sustain a supportive environment for writing? What rules or other agreements should we follow so that all writers have an opportunity to learn? What format or structure should we use in our writing classroom?

The goal of this area of the writing curriculum is to provide students with the knowledge and abilities they need to work together effectively as writers and to establish guidelines that assure the success of all participants and the teacher.

5.1 General

- ☐ Contributes to the success of the writing community.
- ☐ Shares regularly.
- ☐ Provides helpful responses to other writers.
- ☐ Conferences regularly with the teacher.
- ☐ Applies conference suggestions offered by the teacher.
- ☐ Peer conferences effectively.
- ☐ Participates effectively in small group sharing.
- ☐ Requests specific feedback and incorporates it as needed.
- ☐ Moves from stage to stage in the writing process independently.
- ☐ Makes good decisions about when to move on to a new piece.
- ☐ Functions independently when required.
- ☐ Requests specific help and applies it effectively.
- ☐ Knows which writers to ask for certain kinds of help.
- ☐ Makes deadlines.
- ☐ Helps others.
- ☐ Participates appropriately.
- ☐ Shares "status" when asked.
- ☐ Works well during work time.
- ☐ Attends well to mini-lessons.
- ☐ Applies lesson content.
- ☐ Takes writing seriously.
- ☐ Has appropriate writing materials.
- ☐ Observes the rules of the writing community.

6. Connection

What is the reading-writing connection? How are reading and writing related? How can we learn about one subject while engaging in the other? What is the value of studying reading and writing as two parts of the same thing? How do we define reading and writing as complimentary processes?

The goal of this area of the writing curriculum is to help students use the knowledge and skills of reading to improve their knowledge and skills in writing and vice versa.

6.1 General

- ___ Analyzes and assesses reading models to learn more about writing.
- ___ Acquires new writing techniques from reading.
- ___ Identifies forms and analyzes their components.
- ___ Applies writing strategies in reverse to improve reading comprehension.
- ___ Demonstrates knowledge of the complimentary nature of reading and writing.
- ___ Imitates texts read in writing.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding of the connection between expressive reading, sentence fluency, and writing conventions.
- ___ Reads own writing thoroughly.
- ___ Reads the writing of other student writers.
- ___ Learns about the use of conventions from examples in books.
- ___ Analyzes and attempts to emulate the writing style of favorite authors.
- ___ Writes down and keeps favorite passages from other texts.
- ___ Uses sentences in other texts as models for sentence structures in writing.

Official Six Traits Criteria From NWREL

Rater:

Paper:

Date:

Instructions: (1) Read the paper all the way through. (2) Start with the criteria for a “5” and work down. (3) Read each item and enter “Y” for “yes”; “N” for “no”; “S” for “sort of”; Mark your score at the bottom of the appropriate column. (4) You need not mark every item; only those that you feel serve to justify your score. (5) Don’t agonize; trust your gut reaction. (6) There are no right or wrong scores. Just be sure you can justify your assessment using the criteria. (7) Be accurate, not emotional. You’re not giving out a grade or telling someone that he or she is a “bad” or a “good” writer; you’re just trying to find out, as best you can, what the paper’s strengths and weaknesses are.

Ideas

The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

5 > The paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader’s attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story line.

- ___ Ideas are fresh and original.
- ___ The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience and shows insight: an understanding of life and a knack for picking out what is significant.
- ___ Relevant, showing, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.
- ___ The writer develops the topic in an enlightening, purposeful way that makes a point or tells a story.
- ___ Every piece adds something to the whole.

3 > The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.

- ___ It is pretty easy to see where the writer is headed, though more information is needed to “fill in the blanks.”
- ___ The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.
- ___ Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, or extended enough to show in-depth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.
- ___ Support is attempted, but doesn’t go far enough yet in fleshing out the main point or story line.
- ___ Details often blend the original with the predictable.

1 > As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- ___ The writer is still in search of a topic, or has not begun to define the topic in a meaningful, personal way.
- ___ Information is very limited or unclear.
- ___ The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts.
- ___ Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what’s critical.

> Score for the trait of **Ideas**: _____

Organization

The internal structure of a piece, the thread of central meaning, the logical pattern of ideas.

5 > The organization advances and showcases the central idea or story line. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- ___ Details seem to fit where they are placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
- ___ An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.
- ___ Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on.
- ___ Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect.
- ___ Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it.

3 > The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without undue confusion.

- ___ The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
- ___ Sequencing is usually logical, but may sometimes be so predictable that the structure takes attention away from the content.
- ___ Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter. Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.
- ___ The organization sometimes supports the main point or story line; at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.

1 > The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion, or else there is no identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- ___ Sequencing needs work.
- ___ There is no real lead to set up what follows; no real conclusion to wrap things up.
- ___ Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.
- ___ Connections between ideas are confusing or missing.
- ___ Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.

> Score for the trait of **Organization**: _____

Voice

The heart and soul of a piece, the magic, the wit. It is the writer’s unique and personal expression emerging through words.

5 > The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text, is sensitive to the needs of an audience, and is writing to be read.

- ___ The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.
- ___ The tone and voice give flavor to the message and seem appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- ___ The writing seems honest, appealing, and written from the heart.
- ___ The writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic, and an effort to bring the topic to life by anticipating the reader’s questions, and showing why the reader should care or want to know more.

3 > The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.

- ___ The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner. Moments here and there surprise, amuse, or move the reader.
- ___ Voice may emerge strongly on occasion, then retreat behind general, dispassionate language.
- ___ The writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.
- ___ The writer seems aware of an audience, but often tends to weigh words carefully or discard personal insights in favor of safe generalities.

1 > The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic. The paper reflects more than one of the following problems:

- ___ It is hard to sense the writer behind the words. The writer does not seem to reach out to an audience, or to anticipate their interests and questions.
- ___ The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
- ___ The writing may communicate on a functional level, but it does not move or involve the reader.
- ___ The writer does not seem sufficiently at home with the topic to take risks, share personal insights, or make the topic/story personal and real for the reader.

> Score for the trait of **Voice**: _____

Word Choice

The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader. It is the love of language, a passion for words, combined with a skill in choosing words that creates just the right mood.

5 ➔ Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way.

- Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to understand just what the writer means.
- The language is natural and never overdone; phrasing is highly individual.
- Lively verbs energize the writing; precise nouns and modifiers create pictures in the reader's mind.
- Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye—and linger in the reader's mind.
- Cliches and jargon are used sparingly, only for effect.

3 ➔ The language is functional, even if it lacks punch; it is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.

- Words are almost always correct and adequate; they simply lack flair.
- Familiar words and phrases communicate, but rarely capture the reader's imagination. Still, the paper may have one or two fine moments.
- Attempts at colorful language come close to the mark, but sometimes seem overdone.
- Energetic verbs or picturesque phrases liven things up now and then; the reader longs for more.

1 ➔ The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Language is so vague (e.g., *It was a fun time. She was neat. It was nice. We did lots of stuff*) that only the most general message comes through.
- Persistent redundancy distracts the reader.
- Jargon or clichés serve as a crutch.
- Words are used incorrectly, sometimes making the message hard to decipher.
- Problems with language leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say.

➔ Score for the trait of **Word Choice**: _____

Sentence Fluency

The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye.

5 ➔ The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive reading.

- Sentences are constructed in a way that helps make meaning clear.
- Purposeful sentence beginnings show how each sentence relates to and builds upon the one before it.
- The writing has cadence, as if the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning.
- Sentences vary in length as well as structure.
- Fragments, if used, add style.
- Dialog, if used, sounds natural.

3 ➔ The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.

- Sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, but they are usually grammatical. They hang together. They get the job done.
- There is at least some variation in sentence length and structure.
- Sentence beginnings are not all alike.
- The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues (e.g., connecting words and phrases like *however, therefore, on the other hand, to be specific, for example*, etc.) that show how sentences interrelate.
- Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly. Overall though, it is pretty easy to read the paper aloud with a little practice.

1 ➔ The reader has to practice in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward; they need work.
- Phrasing does not sound natural, the way someone might speak.
- The reader must sometimes pause or read over to get the meaning.
- Many sentences begin the same way—and many follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.
- Endless connectives (*and, and so, but then, because, and then, etc.*) create a massive jumble of language in which clear sentence beginnings and endings get swallowed up.
- The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

➔ Score for the trait of **Sentence Fluency**: _____

Conventions

The mechanical correctness of the writing.

5 ➔ The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and so minor that the reader can easily overlook them unless hunting for them specifically.

- Paragraphing tends to be sound; it reinforces organizational structure.
- Grammar and usage contribute to clarity and style.
- Punctuation is accurate and guides the reader through the text.
- Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
- The writer may manipulate conventions—especially grammar and spelling—for stylistic effect.
- The writing is sufficiently long and complex to allow the writer to show skill using a wide range of conventions.
- Only light editing is required to polish the text for publication.

3 ➔ The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting.

- Paragraphing is attempted. Paragraphs sometimes run together or begin in the wrong places.
- Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning.
- Terminal (end-of-sentence) punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation (commas, semicolons, dashes, colons, etc.) is sometimes missing or wrong.
- Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words.
- Moderate editing is required to polish the text for publication.

1 ➔ Errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, etc., repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent (e.g., every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text.
- Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable, and may affect meaning.
- Punctuation is often missing or incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
- The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning. Extensive editing is required.

➔ Score for the trait of **Conventions**: _____

1 ➔ BEGINNING

➔ The writer is searching, exploring, struggling, looking for a sense of purpose or a way to begin working with this trait. This is an early performance; there is great need for revision.

2 ➔ EMERGING

➔ There are brief moments when we get a glimpse of the writer's ability with this trait, but no consistent use. The paper shows promise, a hint of things to come, but there is a need for revision as weaknesses clearly outweigh strengths.

3 ➔ DEVELOPING

➔ The writer is beginning to take control of this trait. The paper shows a balance between strengths and weaknesses. There is definite direction, coherence, momentum, and a sense of purpose, but some revision is called for.

4 ➔ MATURING

➔ The writer is showing more control of this trait including the confidence to experiment. Strengths definitely outweigh weaknesses. One more revision will probably bring it to closure.

5 ➔ STRONG

➔ The writer has control of this trait and is able to use it skillfully to shape the direction of the writing. This is a very strong and controlled performance (though not necessarily perfect). Little or no revision is needed.

Six Traits Criteria For Research Papers

Rater: _____

Paper: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: (1) Read the paper all the way through. (2) Start with the criteria for a "5" and work down. (3) Read each item and enter "Y" for "yes," "N" for "no," "S" for "sort of." Mark your score at the bottom of the appropriate column. (4) You need not mark every item; only those that you feel serve to justify your score. (5) Don't agonize; trust your gut reaction. (6) There are no right or wrong scores. Just be sure you can justify your assessment using the criteria. (7) Be accurate, not emotional. You're not giving out a grade or telling someone that he or she is a "bad" or a "good" writer; you're just trying to find out, as best you can, what the paper's strengths and weaknesses are.

IDEAS

The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

5 > The paper is clear and focused. It thoroughly answers a well-defined key question in understandable, convincing, and expansive terms.

- The main idea, thesis, or research question is clearly defined and detailed. There may be more than one key point, but the paper is not simply a list.
- The writer seems well informed and, as appropriate, draws on relevant information from a variety of resources (e.g., personal experience, reading, investigation, interviews, observations, films).
- The writer continuously anticipates and responds to the reader's informational needs and questions.
- Supporting details (examples, facts, anecdotes, quotations, etc.) are accurate, significant, and helpful in clarifying or expanding the main idea(s).

3 > The paper addresses an identifiable key question by offering the reader general, basic information.

- The reader can identify or infer at least one main assertion or thesis.
- Some support seems grounded in research or experience. Some seems based on common knowledge or best guesses.
- The writer sometimes responds to the reader's informational needs; at other times, important questions are left unanswered.
- More investigation, stronger support, and greater attention to detail would strengthen this paper.

1 > The writer has not yet clarified an important question or issue that this paper will address. One or more of the following problems may be evident:

- The paper may wander or dissolve into a rambling list of ideas. It needs focus.
- Support is either missing, or too vague or questionable, to be helpful.
- The writer does not seem to have the questions, needs, or interests of the audience clearly in mind.
- The writer does not yet have or use the information needed to help a reader understand this topic.

➤ Score for the trait of **Ideas**: _____

ORGANIZATION

The internal structure of a piece, the thread of central meaning, the logical pattern of ideas.

5 > A strong internal structure gives purpose and direction to the main thesis. The organization propels the reader toward the key point(s) or logical conclusions the writer wants to emphasize.

- The introduction engages the reader and shows where the writer is headed.
- Placement of details, anecdotes, facts, and examples seems well thought out, deliberate, and helpful to the reader's understanding.
- Purposeful transitions guide the reader to key points and conclusions.
- The conclusion effectively resolves leftover questions and shows the reader how everything ties together.
- The reader's understanding of the topic grows throughout the paper.

3 > The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without undue confusion.

- The introduction offers at least a hint of things to come.
- Details, examples, facts, and other supportive features are usually linked to main ideas, though they may sometimes pop up in illogical places.
- Transitions are attempted, but the writer sometimes misses opportunities to guide the reader's thinking.
- The conclusion wraps up the discussion, but may leave loose ends unattended.
- Despite some questions, the reader can follow what is being said.

1 > The organizational structure needs a stronger sense of purpose and direction. The reader may feel confused about what to focus on or what conclusions to draw. One or more of the following problems may be evident:

- A strong lead is needed to set up the paper; it just starts in.
- Ideas and supporting details seem randomly ordered; the reader often wonders where the writer is headed.
- Stronger transitions and connections would help the reader link ideas.
- The reader may miss the whole point or have great difficulty following what the writer is trying to say.
- The conclusion does not help the reader make greater sense of what has already been said.

➤ Score for the trait of **Organization**: _____

VOICE

The heart and soul of a piece, the magic, the wit. It is the writer's unique and personal expression emerging through words.

5 > The writer addresses the audience in a voice that is lively, engaging, and wholly appropriate to the topic and purpose of the paper.

- The writer's passion and enthusiasm for this topic are evident throughout the piece.
- The writer seems to know his or her audience well and to speak right to them, drawing them into the discussion and showing concern for their understanding of the topic.
- From opening to close, the writer sustains a kind of energy that holds the reader's attention.
- The reader finds himself or herself caught up in this topic.

3 > The writer projects a tone and voice that seem sincere, pleasant, and generally appropriate for the topic and audience.

- Enthusiasm and commitment to the topic are sometimes evident, though often restrained.
- Moments of spontaneity enliven the piece but may be somewhat dampened by a more prosaic voice that seems less involved.
- The writer seems occasionally aware of the informational needs or interests of the audience.
- The reader feels informed but not really "invited in."

1 > The writer seems indifferent to either topic or audience, and as a result, the tone may be distant, flat, jargonistic, stilted, or just inappropriate. One or more problems may be evident:

- The writer does not seem to reach out to the audience or to think how the tone, style, or language of the piece might affect their response.
- The writer seems bored, distracted, or just anxious to be done with it; consequently, it is hard for the reader not to feel the same.
- Moments of excitement, which might have brought this topic to life, just are not there.
- The writer may be writing more for himself or herself than for an audience, and the result is impersonal—calculated more to show off the writer's specialized knowledge than to engage the reader.

➤ Score for the trait of **Voice**: _____

WORD CHOICE

The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader. It is the love of language, a passion for words, combined with a skill in choosing words that creates just the right mood.

5 > Well-chosen words convey the writer's message in a clear, precise, and highly readable way, often taking the reader to a new level of understanding.

- The vocabulary suits the writer, the subject, and the audience.
- The writer uses the language of the content area with skill and ease, always helping to make meaning clear from context.
- Technical or little-known words are defined or clarified as appropriate, with the writer always taking into account what the audience (probably) already knows.
- The writer consistently chooses explicit, vivid words and phrases that make the message both clear and memorable.

3 > Words are reasonably accurate and make the message clear on a general level.

- Though most language in the paper is both correct and functional, the vocabulary is sometimes inappropriate (too difficult, technical, or informal) for the topic, audience, or both.
- The writer communicates broad concepts but may not have sufficient vocabulary to explore the finer points with precision, detail, or confidence.
- Technical or special terms may sometimes be used without sufficient explanation or contextual clarity.

1 > The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary that restricts what he or she is able to convey, or the writing is so technical and difficult to penetrate that the reader feels shut out. One or more of the following problems may be evident:

- Vocabulary may be inappropriate (incorrect or too general, technical, or informal) for the topic, audience, or both.
- Technical language or specialized vocabulary may be overused, used incorrectly, or missing where it would be really helpful in making a particular point.
- Language lacks the precision needed to convey an explicit, clear message.
- The writer may be using language that "speaks" to an insider but does not help other readers understand or appreciate the topic.

> Score for the trait of **Word Choice**: _____

1 > BEGINNING

- > The writer is searching, exploring, struggling; looking for a sense of purpose or a way to begin working with this trait. This is an early performance; there is great need for revision.

2 > EMERGING

- > There are brief moments when we get a glimpse of the writer's ability with this trait, but no consistent use. The paper shows promise, a hint of things to come, but there is a need for revision as weaknesses clearly outweigh strengths.

Not Assessable. The paper could not be assessed using these criteria because: _____

SENTENCE FLUENCY

The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye.

5 > The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive reading.

- Sentences are constructed in a way that helps make meaning clear.
- Purposeful sentence beginnings show how each sentence relates to and builds upon the one before it.
- The writing has cadence, as if the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning.
- Sentences vary in length as well as structure.
- Fragments, if used, add style.
- Dialog, if used, sounds natural.

3 > The text hums along with a steady beat, but is more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.

- Sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, but they are usually grammatical. They hang together. They get the job done.
- There is at least some variation in sentence length and structure. Sentence beginnings are not all alike.
- The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues (e.g., connecting words and phrases like *however, therefore, naturally, after a while, on the other hand, to be specific, for example, next, first of all, later, but as it turned out, although, etc.*) that show how sentences interrelate.
- Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly. Overall though, it is pretty easy to read the paper aloud with a little practice.

1 > The reader has to practice in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, awkward; they need work.
- Phrasing does not sound natural, the way someone might speak. The reader must sometimes pause or read over to get the meaning.
- Many sentences begin the same way—and many follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.
- Endless connectives (*and, and so, but then, because, and then, etc.*) create a massive jumble of language in which clear sentence beginnings and endings get swallowed up.
- The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

> Score for the trait of **Sentence Fluency**: _____

3 > DEVELOPING

- > The writer is beginning to take control of this trait. The paper shows a balance between strengths and weaknesses. There is definite direction, coherence, momentum, and a sense of purpose, but some revision is called for.

4 > MATURING

- > The writer is showing more control of this trait including the confidence to experiment. Strengths definitely outweigh weaknesses. One more revision will probably bring it to closure.

CONVENTIONS

The mechanical correctness of the writing.

5 > The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and also uses specialized conventions (titles and subtitles, footnotes, a table of contents, a bibliography) effectively to enhance layout and readability of the text.

- Basic conventions are essentially correct; errors are so few and so minor the reader could skip right over them unless searching for them specifically.
- The writer uses titles and subtitles as needed to effectively set off sections of the text.
- The writer uses a table of contents as needed and sets it up with care; each section is easy to locate.
- Footnotes and/or bibliography are formatted and punctuated correctly.
- The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect.
- Only light editing would be required to prepare this text for publication.

3 > Errors in writing conventions, while not overwhelming, begin to impair readability.

- Errors in basic conventions occur often enough or are serious enough to be somewhat distracting and noticeable.
- The writer sometimes uses titles and subtitles, but more frequent or different division of the text would be helpful.
- A table of contents is present but requires some editing in order to be useful.
- Footnotes and/or bibliography are present but require some editing.
- Moderate editing would be required to prepare this text for publication.

1 > Numerous errors in writing conventions consistently distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. One or more of the following problems may be evident.

- Errors in basic conventions are frequent or serious enough that it is sometimes hard to understand or focus on the message.
- Titles or subtitles would be helpful but are not used.
- A table of contents would be helpful but is not used; if used, it contains many errors that need correcting.
- Footnotes and/or bibliography are needed but are not used; if used, they contain many errors that need correcting.
- Extensive editing would be required to prepare this text for publication.

> Score for the trait of **Conventions**: _____

5 > STRONG

- > The writer has control of this trait and is able to use it skillfully to shape the direction of the writing. This is a very strong and controlled performance (though not necessarily perfect). Little or no revision is needed.

Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 1

Teachers, parents and students: these thinking skills strategies are brought to you by our Newspapers In Education program. This strategy provides sensible advice on a sensitive topic that affects every teacher and every student.

What Are We Talking About Here?

The frustrating thing about assessment is figuring out what it is. Do I assess my students by giving them a test? Are grades a form of assessment? Is the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test an assessment because it has the word "assessment" in the title?

People think of assessment as many different things. For teachers, administrators and policymakers, it's hard to make sense of assessment when there's so much confusing information going around. Parents and kids don't get it either.

In a world where every tissue is a Kleenex, every copy a Xerox, and language evolves according to its

use, most people think of assessment as a synonym for testing. To test children is to assess them. And what's more, it's the only way to assess them because only precise numbers can precisely assess learning. Or so it goes.

But true assessment has little to do with gathering statistical information about student learning and everything to do with how we use that information.

Assessment is the gathering of information for the purpose of guiding instruction. If the information we gather doesn't directly inform our teaching, then it's not true assessment. The truth is that the vast majority of data generated by testing individual students is never used to determine the

specific instruction those students should receive. Take the traditional spelling test, for example. One student gets 100%, one student gets 75% and one student gets 50%. Is it likely that these three students will receive appropriately differentiated instruction based on their scores? No. So how does the test help the teacher or the students?

And that's the problem: what we call assessment is often something else that is taking up our valuable time and precious resources, and gives us little in return.

Steve Peha is the President of Teaching That Makes Sense, an education consulting company in Seattle, WA. Visit his Web site at www.ttms.org or send him a comment about this article at stevepeha@ttms.org.



Issue 34: Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 1 (1 of 3)

The Effective Learning Series is part of a 35-week curriculum for improving basic thinking skills. Useful for teachers, home schoolers, parents and students alike, new issues appear in The Seattle Times on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If you missed any in this series, you can order back issues by calling Circulation back copies at 206/464-2001.

Example

Assessing Assessment

You know you're assessing when:

- I looked at my students' last published writing pieces. I noticed many kids having trouble with run-on sentences. They're using "and" and "then" like periods.
- In our last reading conference, I noticed Mary Anne had trouble decoding longer words because she read too quickly.
- I noticed Josh still uses finger counting as his main strategy for adding and subtracting even when working with two-digit numbers.

You know you're not assessing when you're thinking:

- My students can't punctuate sentences because they did poorly on our grammar worksheet.
- Mary Anne is a low reader because she couldn't answer the questions about the story we read in class.
- Josh is very slow in math. When we do our "math-a-minute" worksheets, he completes far fewer problems than the others.

What's a Good Assessment?

A good assessment:

- Uses specific and appropriate language to describe the data gathered and the patterns that are observed.
- Uses direct references to actual student work and behavior.
- Is based on authentic data gathered in an authentic manner from within an authentic context.

Before you do any assessing, ask yourself this question: "How do I plan to use the information I am gathering to guide my instruction?"

If you don't know what you're going to do with the data, don't waste time gathering it. Assessment is extremely time consuming; it shouldn't be done casually. And it should only be done to determine what to teach next.

If you're gathering information about your students is to come up with a grade, you're making two mistakes at the same time:

- (1) You're spending valuable time and energy gathering information that has little or nothing to do with your teaching or your students' learning, and
- (2) You're using that information to form ill-considered judgments about your students that could have serious consequences for their future.

Beginning Activity

Talk to your students about the assessments you conduct, and how you use that information to determine what you teach next. Help them to see that you have a specific rationale for what you ask them to do, based on what you need to know to teach them effectively.

In the Newspaper

Take a look at business, sports or weather information in The Seattle Times and have students make assessments. Help students draw solid conclusions based on data and not on conjecture. Help them distinguish between meaningless assessments and those providing good value.

On the Web

You'll find more information about assessment in The Seattle Times NIE section of the Teaching That Makes Sense Web site. You can even download free copies of articles or send them to your friends via e-mail. Just go to www.ttms.org.

For more information about NIE, visit seattletimes.com/nie.





Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 1

Teachers, parents and students: these thinking skills strategies are brought to you by our Newspapers In Education program. This strategy provides sensible advice on a sensitive topic that affects every teacher and every student.

What is Authentic Assessment?

The word "authentic" simply means "real."

Authentic assessment is a real way of gathering

performance information that a real person would

really use in the real world.

So what does that really mean? Well, if you break it down and apply it to the activities you assess in your classroom, you can think about it this way:

A real way of gathering real performance information ...

How is information gathered about this activity in the real world? What information is worth gathering? Why do people in the real world do this?

... that a real person ...

What role does this person play in the real world? In the real world, what is the assessor's relationship to

the person being assessed? How does the assessor communicate assessment information to the person being assessed?

... would really use ...

What information can be gathered without affecting the results? What information can be used to guide our instruction? How is specific instruction connected to specific outcomes?

... in the real world.

How is this assessment information used in the real world? What are the assessor's ultimate real-world goals? What is the value of the assessment process?

No classroom assessment is ever 100% authentic. The best we can do when gathering information about our students is to ask ourselves these questions and do our best to answer them.

Example

What is an Authentic Activity?

Once you see the value of authentic assessment, you begin to see the necessity of having students pursue authentic activities. But what exactly is an authentic activity?

An authentic activity is something real that real people in the real world really do, done the way real people really do it, for real reasons that really matter. Think of it this way:

Something real ... Is the activity performed in the real world? Can I show the kids a real world model? Can we develop real world criteria to describe the process and/or the result?

... that real people in the real world really do, ... Who does this? Can we learn about real people who do this real activity? Under what circumstances do they do it?

... done the way real people really do it, ... How do real people do this? What is their "work process"? What strategies do they use to solve the problems they encounter?

... for real reasons that really matter. Why do people do this? Who is the audience? How can we provide a "real world" social context for this activity?

There's nothing wrong with doing inauthentic activities. We do them all the time in our own lives. In the classroom we do them to build community, ease tension or just to have fun. Not everything we do in school need be authentic, nor is there any such thing as a completely authentic school activity. (School is artificial, after all.) But authentic activities should account for most of what our children do in school because the more authentic an activity is, the more likely it is that children will develop authentic skills by doing it.

Intermediate Activity

Talk to kids about authenticity. Tell them how things done in school relate to real things outside of school; how writers really write, how readers really read, and how scientists and mathematicians go about their work. And do your best to model classroom practice on the real world.

In the Newspaper

Have students survey The Seattle Times to find things people do in the real world that they could pursue in class. The newspaper features every kind of professional career or pastime. It is a fair representation of the world around us and a good model we can use for instructional content.

On the Web

You'll find more information about assessment in The Seattle Times NIE section of the Teaching That Makes Sense Web site. You can even download free copies of articles or send them to your friends via e-mail. Just go to www.ttms.org.

For more information about NIE, visit seattletimes.com/nie.

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Authenticity determines the reliability of the assessment information you gather. The more authentically it is gathered, the more it will help you figure out what to teach.

Whenever possible, try to base your instructional decisions on information you have gathered in an authentic way. Try also to reduce the amount of time, effort and energy you put into inauthentic methods of gathering assessment information such as tests, worksheets, textbook exercises and so on.

Steve Peha is the President of Teaching That Makes Sense, an education consulting company in Seattle, WA. Visit his Web site at www.ttms.org or send him a comment about this article at stevepeha@ttms.org.



Issue 35: Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 1 (2 of 3)

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Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 1

Teachers, parents and students: these thinking skills strategies are brought to you by our Newspapers In Education program. This strategy provides sensible advice on a sensitive topic that affects every teacher and every student.



A Medical Model of Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

A man goes for a physical. The doctor requests certain tests. A week later, the doctor receives results indicating that the patient has a certain condition. The doctor notifies the patient and recommends a course of treatment. During that course of treatment, doctor and patient communicate to determine its effectiveness and to make adjustments as needed.

While teaching isn't exactly like doctoring, we could probably all take a lesson from our GP when it comes to assessing, evaluating and reporting student learning.

Conduct Meaningful Assessments

Doctors have strong rationale for the tests they conduct. They know that

testing is expensive, time consuming and sometimes uncomfortable. The same is true of testing in the classroom.

Evaluate the Problem, Propose the Solution

Imagine how frustrating it would be if you were told by your doctor that you had a problem — and that was it. No advice, no course of treatment. No information about how the problem arose or what to do about it in the future. Fortunately, most of the time, doctors provide a specific course of action as part of their evaluation. Educational evaluations should be the same.

There's nothing more frustrating than knowing something is wrong and not knowing what to do about it.

Provide Purposeful Reporting

When doctors report their findings, they do so with specific purposes in mind. Generally, they are concerned with the patient's understanding of what they have to say. They want to make sure the patient has the information he or she needs to participate fully and effectively in the course of treatment. If parents and students had information like this, they might not only feel better, they might do better when it comes to resolving problems and making progress.

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Example

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is decision-making based upon the information gathered through assessment. You know you're evaluating when you're thinking something like this: "From the assessment data I gathered, I can see my kids are not doing well with sentence punctuation."

An evaluation is only as valuable as the action taken in response to it. You know you're responding well to an evaluation when you're thinking something like this:

"Because I noticed that many kids were not using periods and capitals correctly, I'll teach some sentence punctuation mini-lessons in writing and support that with simple inquiry activities during reading time where I'll have the kids identify sentence boundaries by ear using expressive reading techniques."

A good evaluation: (1) includes a specific plan of action; (2) uses the assessment data as its rationale; (3) values the work, not the worker.

Before you create an evaluation, ask yourself this question: "How do I know the plan I have outlined will address the needs I have identified through assessment?"

What is Reporting?

Reporting is the way assessment and evaluation information are communicated to others. You know you're reporting when you find yourself sharing your assessment and evaluation information with a parent, a student, a teacher, or an administrator.

A good report: (1) Is presented in a form that is accessible to its intended audience and written in language they understand; (2) References authentic student work; and (3) Provides its audience with information that can be used to construct specific solutions to issues of concern.

Before you produce a report, ask yourself these questions:

"What is my purpose in sharing this information? What do I want my audience to do with it?"

Advanced Activity

Using the criteria supplied in the example on good evaluations and good reports, talk with your students about the evaluations and reports you give them. Help students understand the purpose of your evaluations and how you choose to report your evaluations to them and to their parents.

In the Newspaper

The Seattle Times articles are full of evaluations and reports. Do these follow the guidelines for effective evaluation and reporting? Does the news media do a good job of gathering and supplying all the information its readers need to understand the evaluations and reports they read?

On the Web

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Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 2

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Criteria-Based Assessment

In the 1990s, educators got a great idea: Why not tell kids what we want them to do before they start doing it? And so the age of criteria-based assessment was born. Now it seems that kids use criteria to do just about everything.

In the good old days, teachers would give assignments and students would do their best to hit the mark, often guessing as to what exactly the teacher was looking for. Teachers for their part were often frustrated about the gap between what they wanted and what students produced.

Providing kids with tangible written information describing the quality of work expected of them goes a long way toward reducing guesswork for both teacher and student. It also helps parents get a better notion of what their kids are doing (or not doing) in class. But it doesn't necessarily improve assessment.

It's not Assessment Unless...

Just saying that you're doing criteria-based assessment doesn't make it so. And neither does a criteria list. Often, teachers create criteria simply for the purpose of determining a grade. Using criteria solely as a means of grading does little for assessment.

To use criteria for true assessment purposes, teachers must use their criteria and their students' performance relative to those criteria to determine appropriate instruction. All too often, students are assessed against the

criteria for a given project and then, regardless of how they do, the teacher moves on to a new area of study.

If we use criteria merely as another form of grading, we're confusing the issue and hurting our kids. The real value in criteria comes not from the existence of high standards and clear targets, but from the tangible framework they provide for explicit instruction.

Example

Criteria for Criteria

The success of criteria depends on how we make them and how we use them. When *creating* criteria, keep these three things in mind:

- (1) **Base criteria on authentic models.** When we think about developing criteria, our natural instinct is to begin creating a description of what we'd like students to do. But this is backwards. It makes more sense to start with a model and then create a description based on the work in front of us.
- (2) **Develop the language with the students.** Most of the time, teachers like to make up their own criteria and present them to students. But this isn't the best way to go. It's much more effective to give students a hand in creating their own criteria based on authentic models.
- (3) **Keep the criteria list as short as possible.** Once a list of criteria items gets beyond 8 or 10, it becomes unwieldy. Kids can't remember it easily and readily apply it to their work. Some teachers like to create full blown rubrics with separate descriptions for different levels of performance. It's better to create one set of criteria representing the best performance and have students concentrate on that.

When *using* criteria, think about these three things:

- (1) **Teach criteria items explicitly.** For each item on your criteria list, offer students explicit instruction. Just use your list as a list of lessons and make sure students understand what each item means, why each item is important, and how to produce each item in their own work. Lack of explicit instruction is the number one reason kids fail criteria-based assessments.
- (2) **Teach students to self-assess.** The criteria are more valuable to the students than to the teacher. In some cases, the criteria themselves may represent the learning we want kids to achieve. The only way for criteria to be truly helpful to students is if they know how to apply those criteria accurately to their own work.
- (3) **Use results to guide instruction.** Once students have produced work using the criteria, don't just record it in a grade book and move on. Look at how the class performs as a whole and use the results to determine further instruction. Having a good set of criteria provides a solid instructional framework. But if you don't use the assessment data to guide new instruction, that framework has little value.

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Issue 37: Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 2 (1 of 3)

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Beginning Activity

Take a look at a set of criteria you've created recently and see how it compares with the advice given in the example. Then, try another set in front of the kids using an authentic real world model. See if this approach produces more useful criteria.

In the Newspaper

The Seattle Times has many great models of writing you can work with to create interesting criteria. Take different types of stories and work with students to create small sets of criteria for each one. Encourage students to connect their criteria with actual text from the articles.

On the Web

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Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 2

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How Does Grading Relate to Assessment?

Grading is a form of evaluation not assessment. It's a judgment of a single performance or a group of performances averaged over time. Grading fails as an assessment tool for several reasons:

(1) Grades are reductive.

No human learning can be reduced to a single value without distorting it. Grades restate the actual learning that has occurred in a way that is essentially meaningless.

(2) Grades are arbitrary.

Different teachers assign grades in different ways. Even when criteria are used, the interpretation of the criteria and the final translation into a letter or number is highly subjective.

(3) Averages are misleading.

What does it mean to say that over a nine-week period, someone has learned 82% of something? The fact that most final grades for a course are arrived at through averaging means that the result of most grade-based evaluations makes little sense in terms of actual student learning.

(4) Students can't use grades to improve performance.

How does one change a "B" into an "A"? What exactly is needed in terms of knowledge gained or skills acquired? Grades don't give students the information they need to improve.

(5) Teachers can't use grades to determine instruction.

What instruction does a "B" student need in order to improve? How does the

grade indicate the instruction he or she should receive? Grades don't tell teachers what students have learned and what they need to learn next.

(6) Grades do little for students and even less for teachers.

There is no significant research that supports letter grading. It exists as a tradition only, a tradition that should be questioned and then discarded in favor of approaches that help teachers teach, help students learn, and help parents make good choices about the education of their children.

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Example

If You Have to Grade...

Dubious tradition that it is, grading has been with us for decades and, like most of the ill-considered traditions of education, it will probably be with us for generations to come. But this doesn't mean that we should continue to grade in ways that hurt and confuse our students. If we're going to grade, we should develop (simple and fair) systems, and that emphasize the learning we value most.

The Three Ps

The Three Ps approach to grading works as well as any approach to grading could. The teacher arrives at a grade by evaluating a student's participation, progress and performance. A Three Ps grading system writing class might look like this:

(50%) Participation	(33%) Progress	(17%) Performance
Attends class each day. Follows directions. Shares writing regularly. Offers constructive feedback to others. Maintains a writer's notebook. Completes portfolio requirements	Improves in ability to: Use writing strategies independently Know when own writing needs to be revised. Edit own writing and the writing of others. Choose good writing topics. Write in different forms.	Produces writing that is equal in quality to the best writing of other students at this grade level. Quality is determined by reference to authentic student writing samples and classroom writing criteria.

Intermediate Activity

Introduce the Three Ps model to kids and ask them what they think of it. Ask them to tell you what they think about being graded on things other than just their final performance. Talk to them about what you value in students and point out that there's more to life than doing well on tests.

In the Newspaper

For an exercise in the ridiculousness of grading, have kids grade various pieces in The Seattle Times. Like ads, sections, or even whole editions. Have them and then try to justify themselves. Imagine what it would be like if the newspaper used a grading system. Point out to them that in the real world, we don't use grades. We use other rating systems.

On the Web

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Assessment That Makes Sense, Part 2

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Putting it All Together

The key to effective assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to determine the information we need. Too often, we spend time gathering and recording information that isn't very useful. Fortunately, common sense (something all too rare in this area of education) tells us that we need only track five types of information:

- (1) Strengths.** We need to know what each student is good at because new learning is always related to previous learning. Every student has strengths, and it is part of a teacher's role to identify and nurture them. Students who are not exhibiting strengths need different work to do.
- (2) Accomplishments.** To assess learning, we need to know what students have done. We need authentic work samples and some informal accounting of the circumstances by which they were created.
- (3) Goals.** By looking at what students can do and how they do it, we can determine where they need to go next. This is the heart of the assessment process. To teach effectively, teachers need to have clear learning goals for all students. Students and parents also need to be aware of these goals.
- (4) Instruction.** Once a teacher has made an assessment, he or she has the task of planning appropriate instruction.

Specific instruction should be targeted to help specific students reach specific goals.

(5) Support. Students need help outside of class to reach their goals. Parents often want to help but don't know exactly what to do. Support information is vital if teacher, parent, and student are to work together effectively.

The advantage of recording information in this format is that assessment, evaluation and reporting can be accomplished simultaneously in an integrated fashion.

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Example

SAGIS: An Example of Assessment That Makes Sense

The SAGIS approach (pronounced "say-jiss") is a method of assessment, evaluation, and reporting that works well for teachers, students and parents alike. The key to this approach is that it displays information directly, in common language, without resorting to complex calculations or criteria.

In the SAGIS approach, teachers keep track of five important types of student information: Strengths, Accomplishments, Goals, Instruction and Support.

Here's a SAGIS report for a 3rd grader in writing:

Strengths

- Chooses good topics.
- Listens attentively during sharing and asks good questions.
- Uses audience feedback to improve his pieces.
- Reads own writing expressively.

Accomplishments

- Has published: personal narrative, autobiography, a book review, movie review for class newspaper, and writing contest piece. Has a second book review in drafting.
- Fairly accurate self-assessment.
- Has begun touch typing practice.

Goals

- Share earlier in the writing process to avoid re-starts
- Use more editing strategies to avoid complete re-copying/re-writing.
- Meet deadlines regularly; his perfectionism is getting in the way of his ability to complete tasks.

Instruction

- Conference with him early in the writing process to more closely monitor his progress on individual pieces.
- Help him see that he is often using commas in place of periods.
- Conference with him during editing to review editing marks and their uses.
- Encourage him to use editing marks instead of re-copying.

Support

- Watch closely for perfectionist tendencies. Make sure he doesn't try so hard on things that he misses out on learning opportunities.
- Monitor how often he wants to redo things from scratch at home.
- Monitor your interactions with him around school and non-school activities to assess where he might be developing his concerns about perfectionism.

Advanced Activity

The SAGIS approach can be used on just about any activity. Introduce it to students and have them assess themselves on something they feel they are good at. Ask them to articulate the kinds of instruction and support they would like to read their goals.

In the Newspaper

Take a look at several days of the newspaper and have your students perform a SAGIS assessment of the paper as a whole. See if they can come up with sensible goals and ideas for instruction that the people who make the paper would understand and appreciate. Stress the importance of constructive comments and point out that there's nothing negative in the SAGIS format.

On the Web

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Newspapers In Education

The Seattle Times

Could this be a report card?

Erin Coomes

3RD GRADE • SUNRISE ELEMENTARY • ROOM 406 • MRS. GOFFE • 1ST QUARTER • 1999-2000

WRITING				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Chooses good topics. ★ Uses good word choice. ★ Uses strong feelings; lots of voice. ★ Reads pieces with expression; commands attention of her audience. ★ Pieces have purpose. ★ Accepts feedback and uses it to improve. ★ Listens well; offers good feedback. ★ Uses good lead strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Published: Personal narrative, autobiography, book review, newspaper article, and Veteran's Day contest piece (some after the deadline.) Also has a second book review in drafting and a third book review in pre-writing. ★ Developed a sense of paragraphing. ★ Binder is well organized. ★ Has learned the writing process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Meet deadlines more consistently. ★ Visit less with other students, and use work time more efficiently. ★ More personal narratives. ★ Become a peer editor and perhaps an editor our class newspaper. ★ Begin typing instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Talk with her about deadlines and set up a monitoring system. ★ Talk about working during work time and will set up a self-monitoring system if necessary. ★ Require her to write 3 personal narratives this term. ★ Talk with her about being a peer editor. ★ Start working with our classroom typing program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Help her at home to keep track of important deadlines. ★ Is she aware that talking during work time is causing her to miss deadlines? ★ Talk with her about childhood memories; encourage her to use the best ones for pieces in class. ★ Continue typing practice at home; make sure she is touch typing using the "home row".

READING				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Reads a variety of genres: fiction, poetry, non-fiction, magazines, etc. ★ Reads expressively. ★ Great tutor: models expressive reading and positively supports her first grade reading buddy. ★ Understands humor: as in "Amelia Bedlia" books. ★ Understands author's purpose. ★ Shares regularly. ★ Works well with her 1st grade buddy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has read: Stellaluna, Olive, the Other Reindeer, Winds in the Willows--10 pps., The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Lady and the Tramp, Story of the Statue of Liberty, One Hundred and One Dalmations,--pp. 2-12, Martha Speaks, Duck Tails, Webby saves the Day, Berenstein Bears. ★ Developed an interest in series books. ★ Understands book review format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage her to become a reading tutor for other kids in class. ★ Encourage her to develop a knowledge of and preference for a particular author. ★ Encourage her to read more challenging books—a particularly more substantial chapter books. ★ Assess her own strengths as a reader particularly as they relate to her strengths in writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Show her how to help others through her ability to read expressively. ★ Talk with her about reading books by a certain author based on other books she has read. ★ Find her the right books to help her reach the next level in a way that she feels comfortable with. ★ Talk with her about how it is that she writes at a much higher level than she is reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Have her read for you out loud at home and praise her use of expression. ★ When the next book order comes out look for a good author—Beverly Cleary, Roald Dahl, etc. Encourage her to try some of their chapter books. ★ Talk to her about books she would like to read. ★ Talk with her about how she feels about her reading. (She's very good at it. We'd just like her to try some harder books.)

MATH				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Notebook is very well organized; clear and easy to read. ★ Enjoys our beginning algebra work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Writes real life math stories with well thought out solutions. ★ Trades in addition and borrows in subtraction using traditional and alternative strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Master basic addition and subtraction facts in mental math. (She does better on paper than she does in her head.) ★ Consistently get 8 or more out of the 10 daily mental math problems correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ More work with graph paper and triangle strategies. ★ Talk to her about how to visualize math problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide graph paper for her at home. ★ When she does math homework encourage her to visualize the numbers in her head as she works out problems.

A plan book? A grade book? A curriculum guide? Assessment data? It could be all of these. It could be all of your classroom record keeping.



Interactive Planning, Assessment, and Reporting

Every teacher has to plan. But we all know what happens to even the best laid plans. Every teacher has to assess. That's just part of the job; teachers do it all the time whether they are conscious of it or not. And every teacher has to report student progress. But no teacher should have to spend hour after frustrating hour recording information, processing data, and filling out forms that don't help them teach, don't help their students learn, or don't help parents and other adults support children effectively outside of school. And yet, this is exactly what most planning, assessment, and reporting is like today.

"This is so very true! In my experiences over the last 33 years, I have to admit that most (about 31) of those years I would sit down with a district textbook, write down objectives, outcomes, etc., all based on the information from the text. I never really thought about basing my teaching on my kids, I just followed along with the district curriculum. But now I'm following my students by teaching to their individual needs, and the difference is amazing. I'm having my best year ever, my students are doing better, and I haven't looked in a single textbook all year."

Most teachers treat planning, assessment, and reporting as three separate and loosely related activities. They plan first even though accurate planning is hard to do before you know much about your students. Then, somewhere in the process of executing their plan—most often at the end—they attempt to assess student learning. But often those assessments are based on inauthentic activities that tell them little about what children have really learned, and by assessing at the end of an instructional unit, the data gathered is of little use to anyone (this traditional "teach first, test later" approach is completely backwards and that's why it's not effective). Finally, at the end of a quarter, trimester, or semester teachers sit down, often for hours on end, with all the information they've gathered, and try to put it into some kind of standardized report.

"I would spend hours correcting papers and recording scores into a grade book, and then at the end of each quarter I would somehow try to come up with grades that represented what my students had learned. It was always impossible to capture each child's performance in a grade or with those standardized comments, so I would end up spending even more time writing lengthy narratives to try to make up for it. I realize now that it was all pretty much a waste of time because none of it—not the planning, or the correcting, or the grading, or even the narratives—had anything to do with what my students needed to learn or what I needed to do to help them."

The typical results are these: **1)** What happens in the classroom on a day-by-day basis rarely matches the pre-conceived plan, or if it does, it's only because the teacher ignores the individual needs of the students; **2)** The assessment data that teachers gather is rarely used to guide instruction because it's typically gathered at the end of a unit right before moving on to the next area of study; **3)** The reports teachers spend so much time on rarely convey any meaningful information about student learning.

"I found that the only way I could actually stick to my plans was to be a total fanatic. And that's what I was. It didn't matter what the kids were learning, I just pushed right ahead. I had a principal who held us to our plans and I wasn't going to be caught off guard. Meanwhile, the assessment information I was supposed to collect really ended up being more of a report about what I'd taught during the unit. It was more about me than it was about the kids. And when the unit ended, I just moved on to the next one. Some kids made progress while others didn't, but because I was teaching to a textbook it didn't really matter. I just followed the Teacher's Guide. When it came time for progress reports, it was very hard for me to offer detailed information about individual students. I remember one year looking back on the reports I'd written previously: it was mostly vague "teacher" comments that I wrote just to make myself sound smart—like I really knew the kids, when in reality I didn't know them very well at all, at least not like I do now."

The problem is not with planning, assessment, or reporting per se. After all, these are just the necessary parts of every teacher's craft. The problem is that we don't put these three essential elements together in a sensible way that accounts for how they interact.

"Before I switched to this new approach everything I did seemed unrelated. And when we started using continuums, things didn't get much better—and I was on the committee that designed them! I realized that all I was doing was checking things off, and sometimes I didn't even know what those check-offs meant. I wasn't following a textbook quite as much but I was now following a continuum that I didn't understand, one that didn't seem to match my kids or my teaching style. No matter how I looked at it, it just didn't add up. I know now that I wasn't teaching to the needs of my kids—and believe me, there's really no other way to do it. As far as real assessment goes, we have never been well trained in what we are supposed to assess and how to go about it. But I was amazed—and challenged!—to find that this new approach actually helped me to improve my assessment skills while I was assessing. I found that the things I was supposed to look for were built right in. And each assessment could be different for each child. As a result, I feel much more confident now about assessing my students and teaching to their individual needs. I also learned—and this was the challenging part—where I need to improve in my ability to teach and to observe my students accurately."

Planning, assessment, and reporting should be closely related in a teacher's work because they are inseparable in a teacher's craft. Instructional planning should be determined by assessment information gathered *before* instruction begins. And in the end, reporting should be a simple plain-English analysis of what a student has learned, along with an inventory of what has been taught and what needs to be learned next in order for that student to be successful. To achieve all this in an efficient and effective way, planning, assessment, and reporting must be combined into a single, purposeful task that provides teachers with meaningful insight into their work. This is the idea behind *i*PAR: Interactive Planning, Assessment, and Reporting.

There are three main components to *i*PAR (pronounced "eye-par"):

- ★ **SAGIS** (pronounced "say-jiss") is a method of recording and reporting individual student progress relative to instruction. It is the heart of the *i*PAR system. The acronym stands for **S**uccesses, **A**ccomplishments, **G**oals, **I**nstruction, and **S**upport.
- ★ **SCaN** (**S**uccesses, **C**hallenges, and **N**ew Instruction) is a planning tool teachers can use to identify the successes they are experiencing, the challenges that need to be addressed, and the new material they plan to introduce next.
- ★ **ClipNotes** are simple, two-sided printouts teachers can carry on a clipboard and use to record student progress while monitoring their instructional goals.

"Having just finished my first quarter conferences with this approach, I know that parents are overwhelmingly pleased. These were the easiest conferences I've ever had; I felt so prepared, and many parents commented on how well they felt I knew their kids. And what's even better is that I have already planned for the next quarter because the assessment part and the planning part fit together so easily. I put my assessment information into SAGIS, used SCaN for my overall planning, and then created my ClipNotes for each subject. Now each day I just take out a copy of my ClipNotes and start teaching. As I observe and conference individually with students, I make brief notes about their progress. I can keep track of everything I'm doing while I teach, and I'm actually gathering assessment data, following my plan, and filling out my progress reports more or less at the same time."

Finally, because planning, assessment, and reporting are such important aspects of teaching, the methods we use to perform these activities should make us more effective teachers. In order to be effective, teachers need to know three things:

- ★ **They need to know their subject:** *i*PAR helps teachers to know their subject better by encouraging them to make instructional decisions based on authentic activities and tangible results.
- ★ **They need to know their students:** *i*PAR helps teachers know their students better by encouraging them to make more frequent and more accurate observations of student behavior and attitudes.
- ★ **And they need to know themselves:** *i*PAR helps teachers to know themselves better by showing them where they are strong in each subject area and where they may need some assistance. It also helps them to identify the specific questions they need to ask in order to acquire the information they need to improve.

In short, *i*PAR helps to produce not only better teaching but better teachers as well. By using *i*PAR, teachers can actually improve in their craft simply by using the tools on a regular basis as part of their normal planning, assessment, and reporting work.

"I can't believe how much I've changed this year! And a lot of it is because I'm teaching in this new way. For the first time in my long career teaching really makes sense. I am focused on my students. I know what I'm doing every day, and for once I know why I'm doing what I'm doing because it's always based on whatever has happened the day before. I've still got a lot to learn, but at least now I'm asking the right questions and I know where to go to find the right answers."



Assessment is...

The gathering of information for the purpose of guiding instruction.

As in...

“When I looked at their last published pieces, I noticed that many kids were having trouble with run-on sentences.”

A good assessment...

- ★ Uses specific and appropriate language to describe the data gathered and the patterns that are observed.
- ★ Is based on authentic data gathered in an authentic manner from within an authentic context.

Before you perform any assessment, ask yourself: "How do I plan to use the data I am gathering to guide my instruction?" If you don't know what you're going to do with the data, don't waste time gathering it.

Evaluation is...

A decision made based upon the information gathered through assessment.

As in...

"Because I noticed that many kids were not using periods and capitals correctly, I'll teach some sentence punctuation mini-lessons in writing and support that with simple inquiry activities during reading time where I'll have the kids identify sentence boundaries by ear using expressive reading techniques."

A good evaluation...

- ★ Includes a specific plan of action.
- ★ Uses the assessment data as its rationale.

Before you create an evaluation, ask yourself this question: "How do I know that the plan I have outlined will address the needs I have identified through assessment?"

Reporting is...

The way assessment and evaluation information is communicated to others.

As in...

(See "SAGIS" example elsewhere in this document...)

A good report...

- ★ Is presented in a form that is accessible to the audience, and written in language they understand.
- ★ Is constructive in nature: it provides its audience with information that can be used to construct specific solutions to issues of concern.

Before you produce a report, ask yourself this question: "What is my purpose in sharing this information?"

What is an authentic activity?

Something real that real people in the real world really do, done the way real people really do it, for real reasons that really matter.

Something real...

- ★ Is the activity performed in the real world?
- ★ Can I show the kids a real world model?
- ★ Can we develop real world criteria to describe the model?

...that real people in the real world really do,...

- ★ Who does this?
- ★ Can we learn about real people who do this real activity?
- ★ Under what circumstances do they do it? Why do they do it? How do they do it?

...done the way real people really do it,...

- ★ How do real people do this?
- ★ What is their "work process"?
- ★ What strategies do they use to solve the problems they encounter?

...for real reasons that really matter.

- ★ Why do people do this?
- ★ Who is the audience?
- ★ How can we provide a "real world" social context for this activity in the artificial world of school?

There's nothing wrong with doing inauthentic activities. We do them all the time in our own lives. In the classroom we do them to build community, ease tension, or just to have fun. Not everything we do in school need be authentic, nor is there any such thing as a completely authentic school activity. (School is artificial after all.) But authentic activities should account for *most* of what our children do in school because the more authentic an activity is the more likely it is that children will develop authentic skills from doing it.

There is one area in our work where we should always stress authenticity and that is in assessment. *Assessment information is only useful to the extent that it accurately reflects a student's authentic abilities and guides our authentic instruction.* We cannot accurately assess our students' abilities, or guide authentic instruction, when we base our analyses on the results of inauthentic tasks.

What is authentic assessment?

A real way of gathering performance information that a real person would really use in the real world.

A real way of gathering real performance information...

- ★ How is information gathered about this activity in the real world?
- ★ What information is worth gathering?
- ★ Why do people in the real world do this?

...that a real person...

- ★ What role does this person play in the real world?
- ★ In the real world, what is this assessor's relationship to the person being assessed?
- ★ How does the assessor communicate assessment information to the person being assessed?

...would really use...

- ★ What information can be gathered without affecting the results?
- ★ What information can be used to guide our instruction?
- ★ How is specific instruction connected to specific outcomes?

...in the real world.

- ★ How is this assessment information used in the real world?
- ★ What are the assessor's ultimate real-world goals?
- ★ What is the value of the assessment process?

Whenever we collect assessment data we need to ask ourselves how we know we can trust the data we collect. One way to increase the reliability of assessment data is to make sure that we gather it by authentic means. This doesn't mean we have to throw out all data gathered by traditional academic techniques. It simply means that whenever possible we should base our instructional decisions on data that has been gathered in an authentic way, and that we should always strive to reduce the amount of time, effort, and energy we put into inauthentic methods of gathering assessment data such as tests, worksheets, textbook exercises, and so on.

The best way to insure that our data is reliable is to offer students as many choices as we possibly can. Whenever there is choice, there is at least some measure of authenticity because the learner is directly responsible for guiding some parts of the activity. Learners also perform better in situations where they feel they have some control over how they are to complete a task.



- [1] Establish a safe learning environment.
- [2] Put students in authentic problem-solving situations.
- [3] Assess students through informal observation to determine their strengths.
- [4] Provide many opportunities for students to produce authentic work and note their accomplishments.
- [5] Assess authentic work and set developmentally appropriate goals for each student.
- [6] Survey individual goals for patterns that can be addressed through whole class instruction.
- [7] Plan for the next assessment period: build on current successes, address current challenges, introduce new material.
- [8] Align the instructional plan with state and district standards.
- [9] Execute the plan through carefully chosen whole class mini-lessons and small group work, but primarily through focused individual conferences.
- [10] Adjust the plan as needed; set new goals for individual students; follow the students by basing each day's teaching on what has occurred previously.

November 17, 1999

Dear Parents,

This year in Room 406 we are piloting a new kind of progress report called SAGIS: Strengths, Accomplishments, Goals, Instruction, and Support. We have chosen this report because we feel it is the best way we can answer the five most important questions you have about your child's education:

- ★ What are my child's **STRENGTHS** in reading, writing, and math?
- ★ What has my child **ACCOMPLISHED** this term that shows those strengths?
- ★ Based on my child's accomplishments, what **GOALS** do you have for my child next term?
- ★ What **INSTRUCTION** will my child receive in order to meet these goals?
- ★ Based on the instruction you will be offering in class, how can I **SUPPORT** my child at home?

Some parents seek an answer to a sixth question: How does my child compare to other children in the same grade? If you would like a detailed assessment of how your child compares to other 3rd graders across the country, we would be happy to provide this assessment to you in writing. It is our belief, however, that your child's ranking relative to other children in the same grade is not relevant to their success, your support, or our instruction.

In addition to the SAGIS report, you also have two other sources of information about your child: 1) The Gates-MacGinitie test; and 2) The Enumclaw School District report card.

The Gates-MacGinitie test provides information about a child's reading vocabulary but is not a good indicator of literacy development. To properly assess your child's reading performance, and to plan appropriate instruction, we use much more accurate and thorough techniques. If you would like information about the assessment techniques we use in reading, we would be happy to provide that for you.

The Enumclaw School District report card was designed to indicate your child's growth over time. However, we have found in previous years that Mrs. Goffe's students often exhibit abilities that are not represented here. We have also found that we cannot use this tool to guide our teaching. The SAGIS report, by contrast, helps us follow your child closely, by listing all significant indicators that we observe. It then helps us to design accurate and effective instruction that meets your child's individual needs.

In the SAGIS report we have noted the best information we have at this time on your child's growth in each of the three major subject areas. The report describes how your child is doing, how we expect your child to develop next term, and what you can do to support your child at home.

We're very excited about the SAGIS report and we hope you like it, too. However, if you don't like it, we need to hear from you right away so that we can provide you with whatever other information you would like. If you have any questions for us, or any suggestions about how we can communicate with you more effectively, please let us know as soon as possible.

We're having a great year and we hope that you are, too. Thank you for taking the time, effort, and energy to help us create the best education possible for your child.

Sincerely,

Esther Goffe, Judy Bruggeman, and Steve Peha

Mitch Stewart

WRITING				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Chooses good topics. ★ Listens attentively during sharing and asks good questions. ★ Uses audience feedback to improve his pieces. ★ Extremely conscientious. ★ Reads his own writing expressively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has published: personal narrative, autobiography, a book review, movie review for newspaper, and Veteran's Day contest piece. Has a second book review in drafting. ★ Fairly accurate self-assessment. ★ Has begun touch typing practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Share more often earlier in the writing process to avoid re-starts and getting too far ahead of himself. ★ Improve use of capitals and periods. ★ Use more editing strategies to avoid complete re-copying/re-writing. ★ Meet deadlines more regularly: his perfectionism is getting in the way of his ability to complete tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Conference with him early in the writing process to more closely monitor his progress on individual pieces. ★ Help him see that he is often using commas in place of periods. ★ Conference with him during editing to review editing marks and their uses. ★ Encourage him to use editing marks instead of re-copying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Watch closely for perfectionist tendencies. Make sure he doesn't try so hard on things that he misses out on learning opportunities. ★ Monitor how often he wants to redo things from scratch at home. ★ Monitor your interactions with him around school and non-school activities to assess where he might be developing his concerns about perfectionism.

READING				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Chooses books at appropriate levels. ★ Reads a wide variety of texts: fairy tale, fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines, etc. ★ Summarizes well: uses only relevant details. ★ Has a good vocabulary: can often explain to others what words mean. ★ Excellent expressive reader. ★ Works well with 1st grade reading buddy. ★ Can determine author's purpose and main idea.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has read: Pokemon, Mrs. Piggie Wiggle, 1,000 Facts about the Earth, Alaska Critters, Loveable Lyle, McGwire and Sosa, Hurricane Floyd, Use Your Brain, Patrick Harrington Bollmer Speaks, Cecily Small and Rainy Day Adventures, Mrs. Peter Rabbit, Curious George. ★ Has written two book reviews. ★ Has learned basic book review format and has started to experiment with his own approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Read more challenging books. ★ Write more complex book reviews that include more detail and an expansion of our basic book review form. ★ Develop a knowledge of and preference for a particular author.; encourage him to begin an author study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide him with more complex texts: he recently asked for a Harry Potter book. (He just started it.) ★ Show him some other ways of structuring a book review. ★ Talk with him about reading books by certain authors based on other books he has read. I'd like him to identify a favorite author by the end of next term. (Maybe the author of the Harry Potter series?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Take him to a good kids bookstore ("All for Kids" or "University Bookstore" in Seattle), or to the library, and have him pick out a few books for upper elementary age readers: Roald Dahl, Gary Paulson, Avi, more Harry Potter books, etc... ★ Talk with him about the books he is reading using "The 5 Facts of Fiction" and "The 5 Big Questions."

MATH				
STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ His writing in math is well organized: it's clear and easy to read. ★ Shares frequently. ★ Writes out math problems very thoroughly: explains his thinking well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has mastered basic addition and subtraction facts. ★ Works well with multi-digit addition and subtraction using both alternative and traditional strategies. ★ Consistently scores 9 or better out of 10 on mental math. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop mastery of basic multiplication and division facts. ★ Write more challenging math problems. ★ Encourage him to become a math tutor for other kids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Continue with graph paper and triangle strategies; write real life problems using multiplication and division. ★ Show him examples of more complex problems. Encourage him to pick problems from his everyday life. ★ Show him how to help others through his ability to think clearly and explain math procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Make him aware of when he uses math in his life: with money, time, dates, sports, games, etc... ★ Ask him to talk you through some of the math he does at home. ★ Help him to become aware of when he might encounter multiplication and division in his life.

Jaqueline Grant

WRITING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Includes lots of detail. ★ Strong sense of purpose. ★ Shows strong feelings. ★ Chooses good topics. ★ Meets deadlines. ★ Shows a good understanding of basic writing conventions. ★ Keeps binder well organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Published a personal narrative, autobiography, two book reviews, newspaper article, and a Veteran's Day contest piece. Has a second book review and a third narrative in drafting with a third book review in pre-write. ★ Fairly accurate self-assessment of best piece. ★ Has begun touch typing practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Do more pre-writing. Specifically, more use of the Idea-Details and What-Why-How strategies. ★ Read own pieces more expressively. ★ Assert her own preferences more when receiving feedback from the audience. ★ Help her to improve her sense of paragraphing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Re-visit pre-writing strategies and conference with her during pre-writing. ★ Encourage her to project more when she reads in front of the class. ★ Validate what she's doing well and encourage her to only make the changes that she truly wants to make. ★ Help her to analyze paragraphs in published books and begin to articulate the rules of paragraphing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage Jaqueline to assert her preferences and opinions about things. ★ Talk with Jaqueline about the pieces she is writing. Ask her questions that will bring out things that she feels strongly about.

READING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Can summarize what she has read. ★ Can say why she has chosen a particular book. ★ Chooses books at appropriate level. ★ Fluent oral reader. ★ Loves to share. ★ Very good tutor for her 1st grade buddy reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has read a variety of books: chapter books, series books, non-fiction, newspaper, etc. (She did not turn in her reading list because she was absent. We'll update and include this information on her next report.) ★ Has published two book reviews and is working on a third. ★ Oral reading has slowed to an appropriate pace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Read more non-fiction. ★ Improve her ability to summarize by analyzing main idea and author's purpose. ★ Encourage her to choose more challenging books. ★ Improve expression in oral reading: project more; more emphasis on important words and phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Introduce her to non-fiction books in areas of personal interest. ★ Use "Five Big Questions"—especially #3 and #4. ★ Offer her a selection of harder books and talk with her about how to know if they are appropriate. ★ Encourage her to project more and to identify significant parts of text for emphasis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Model expressive reading for her and talk with her about what you do to make the text come alive. ★ Encourage her to read non-fiction books in her interest areas. ★ Share your own reading of non-fiction texts.

MATH

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Her writing in math is well organized; it's clear and easy to read. ★ Shares frequently. ★ Very consistent in her work production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Successfully solves multi-digit addition problems using traditional and alternative strategies. ★ Has command of basic addition and subtraction facts. ★ Consistently scores 9 or better out of 10 on mental math. ★ Has begun to write out her solutions more thoroughly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Improve work with borrowing in subtraction. ★ Seek new challenges independently. ★ Improve understanding of place value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Spend more time exploring subtraction. Re-visit subtraction strategies. Make sure she can use the traditional strategy as well as the alternative strategies. ★ Encourage her to do more peer tutoring. ★ Conference with her about her understanding of place value and formulate a specific plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Talk with her about her math homework: ask her to explain to you what she's doing and why she's doing it. ★ Can she help her younger brother with math? ★ Talk with Jaqueline about math in your life. Let her help out around the house whenever possible.

Jared Farmer

WRITING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Meets deadlines. ★ Has a good command of basic writing conventions. ★ Listens well during sharing time and asks good questions. ★ Asks for feedback to improve his writing. ★ Has a large vocabulary; volunteers to give definitions of words for the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Published a personal narrative, autobiography, book review, movie review, and Veteran's Day contest piece. Has a personal narrative and a second book review in drafting, with a third book review in pre-writing. ★ Began touch typing practice. ★ Learned to use the Writing Process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Listen more carefully to directions, follow through the first time they are given; use work time more effectively. ★ Do more pre-writing: more use of the Idea-Details and What-Why-How strategies. ★ Ask questions in a respectful tone of voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Speak to him about listening and, if necessary, set up a self-monitoring system to help him be more aware of how he is using work time. ★ Re-visit pre-writing strategies and conference with him during pre-writing. ★ Discuss and set up good questioning techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Talk with Jared at home about his writing so he can develop more pride in his work. ★ Share and discuss the details about pieces you have read in books or newspapers. ★ Include Jared in family discussions which involve questioning others on their opinions or thoughts in a respectful way.

READING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Large vocabulary; often volunteers to give definitions of words for the class. ★ Enjoys reading; chooses to read during free time after work is completed. ★ Chooses both fiction and non-fiction to read. ★ Loves to share; easily and eagerly shares thoughts and opinions while discussing literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has read: Schmemnoff Discoveries, Holes, Escape from the Black Forest, The Iron Scepter, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Penguin Group, The Tower of Gaborhe. ★ Has written two book reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Write more complex book reviews that include more relevant details. ★ Experiment with our basic book review form. ★ Slow down and read with expression; take extra care to pronounce words more clearly. ★ Improve his interactions with his 1st grade buddy: he needs to be more patient and more supportive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Show him some other ways of structuring a review. ★ Re-visit expressive reading; remind him to project more and to speak more clearly. ★ Assign him to a different buddy; talk to him about how he can be kinder and more responsive to this new child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Talk about books that you have read. Discuss the relevant details and lessons learned from your reading. ★ Have Jared read for you. If he reads quickly, remind him that fast reading is not good reading; good reading is slow, expressive, and clearly spoken. ★ Talk with Jared about how he interacts with his 1st grade buddy. Find out why he is so impatient and why he sometimes ignores his buddy or refuses to help.

MATH

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Loves mental math problems. ★ Has a good understanding of place value. ★ Has a good understanding of algebraic equations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Good command of basic addition and subtraction facts; consistently gets 9 or 10 on daily mental math. ★ Works successfully in multi-digit addition and subtraction with both traditional and alternative strategies. ★ Uses measurement strategies well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Improve organization of notebook: go page-by-page, organize material more neatly, etc.. ★ Solutions to real life story problems need to be written specifically in the format we have designed. ★ Write more challenging math problems. ★ Encourage him to become a math tutor for other kids, and to support other learners more effectively. ★ Improve mastery of multiplication and division facts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Speak to him about how to use the fronts and back of pages and how to keep the problems easy to read. ★ Conference with him about writing out the solutions to real life math problems. ★ Show him examples of more complex problems from real life. ★ Show him how to help others through his ability to think clearly and explain math procedures. ★ Encourage him to continue using his graph paper and triangle strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage him to use his math knowledge to help you solve problems around the house. ★ Talk with him and make him aware of complex math problems in your daily life. Discuss the steps you use to solve your own math problems.

Erin Coomes

WRITING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Chooses good topics. ★ Uses good word choice. ★ Uses strong feelings; her spirit comes out in her pieces. ★ Reads own pieces with expression; presents well; commands the attention of her audience. ★ Pieces have purpose. ★ Accepts feedback and uses it to make her pieces better. ★ She is an attentive listener who offers good feedback to others. ★ Uses good leads strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Published: Personal narrative, autobiography, book review, newspaper article, and Veteran's Day contest piece (some of these after the deadline.) Also has a second book review in drafting and a third book review in pre-writing. ★ Developed a sense of paragraphing. ★ Binder is very well organized. ★ Has learned the writing process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Meet deadlines more consistently. ★ Visit less with other students, and use work time more efficiently. ★ More personal narratives. ★ Become a peer editor and perhaps an editor our class newspaper. ★ Begin typing instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Talk with her about deadlines and set up a monitoring system. ★ I will speak to her about working during work time and will set up a self-monitoring system if necessary. ★ Require her to produce 3 personal narratives this term. ★ Talk with her about being a peer editor, see if she is interested, and pair with appropriate students. ★ Start working with our classroom typing program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Help her at home to keep track of important deadlines. ★ See if she is aware that her talking during work time is causing her to miss deadlines. ★ Talk with her about childhood memories and encourage her to use the best ones for pieces in class. ★ Continue with typing practice at home but please make sure she is touch typing using the correct "home row key and finger relationships.

READING

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Reads a variety of genres; fiction, poetry, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines, etc. ★ Reads expressively. ★ Great tutor: models expressive reading and positively supports her first grade reading buddy. ★ Understands humor: as in "Amelia Bedlia" books. ★ Understands author's purpose. ★ Shares regularly. ★ Works well with her 1st grade buddy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has read: Stellaluna, Olive, the Other Reindeer, Winds in the Willows--10 pps., The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Lady and the Tramp, Story of the Statue of Liberty, One Hundred and One Dalmations,--pp. 2-12, Martha Speaks, Duck Tails, Webby saves the Day, Berenstein Bears. ★ Developed an interest in series books. ★ Understands book review format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage her to become a reading tutor for other kids in class. ★ Encourage her to develop a knowledge of and preference for a particular author. ★ Encourage her to read more challenging books—a particularly more substantial chapter books. ★ Assess her own strengths as a reader particularly as they relate to her strengths in writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Show her how to help other readers through her ability to read expressively. ★ Talk with her about reading books by a certain author based on other books she has read. ★ Find her the right books to help her reach the next level in a way that she feels comfortable with. ★ Talk with her about how it is that she writes at a much higher level than she is reading. (Perhaps she's just never challenged herself in reading or has some personal concerns about it.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Have her read for you out loud at home and praise her use of expression. ★ When the next Scholastic book order comes out look for a good author--Beverly Cleary, Roald Dahl, etc.. Encourage her to try reading some of their chapter books. ★ Talk to her about new books she would like to read. ★ Talk with her about how she feels about her reading. (She's very good at it. We'd just like her to try some harder books.)

MATH

STRENGTHS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	GOALS	INSTRUCTION	SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Notebook is very well organized; clear and easy to read. ★ Enjoys our beginning algebra work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Writes real life math stories with well thought out solutions. ★ Trades in addition and borrows in subtraction using traditional and alternative strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Master basic addition and subtraction facts in mental math. (She seems to be able to do better on paper than she does in her head.) ★ Consistently get 8 or more out of the 10 daily mental math problems correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ More work with graph paper and triangle strategies. ★ Talk to her about how to visualize math problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide graph paper for her at home. ★ When she does math homework encourage her to visualize the numbers in her head as she works out problems.

It's Easier Than it Looks

In a message dated 10/25/99 6:39:39 AM Pacific Daylight Time, sshelton@indep.k12.mo.us writes:

> Hi Steve,
>
> I am working to assess my students using SAGIS. I have stumbled upon a
> mental block. I am having trouble identifying concise ways to list
> their strengths and I am having trouble with the Support column.
>
> Shannon

Dear Shannon,

Yeah, it takes a bit of a “rethink” to start doing this. Each of us who has tried it has bumped into this little road block. Just shows you how far we've strayed over the years from simple “plain English” ways of talking about kids.

Here's what I do when I get stuck:

- [1] I realize that I don't need a different set of descriptors for every kid. In fact, when I assess the kids I teach, I find they all get the same basic set of items. Why? Well, those are the things I teach them and look for in their work to guide my teaching. So most kids should come out with very similar information although there's plenty of opportunity to individualize it as needed.
- [2] I realize that I don't need very many descriptors to tell the story I want to tell. Three or four in each column does the trick. This is very different from contemporary report cards where there are sometimes dozens of things to check off. The difference here is that we're checking off only the ones that really matter for each kid.
- [3] I think about what really makes the difference between successful learners and unsuccessful learners. Again, there are only a few basic things for me. Attitude and effort are very big for me. I'm sure you have a few key things that you look for. Stick with these.

Finally, I have some guidelines I keep in mind for coming up with items in each column:

The STRENGTHS Column

A strength is something a student brings to all of his or her learning. It's an attitude or belief. It's also a habit. For example, here are some strengths that I think make a difference:

Shares regularly; Asks good questions; Takes risks; Uses audience feedback; Tries hard even when things aren't going well; Finds unusual solutions to common problems; Finds multiple solutions to the same problem; Works hard consistently; Always willing to help others, Etc...

Strengths are things kids bring to their work; they are not the work itself.

The ACCOMPLISHMENTS Column

Accomplishments represent tangible evidence that learning is occurring. Obviously, any student work counts here. But so do things that don't manifest themselves in paper records. For example, in one 3rd grade class the kids are learning how to do expressive readings. There's no paper record of these so I will be noting how many some kids have done and the quality of their work. For kids who are very reluctant, sometimes just sharing for the first time is an accomplishment.

An accomplishment is something a student has done that shows evidence of growth.

The GOALS Column

This is the easiest column for me. It's just what I want the kid to do next. I try to include a mix of items that I know I'll be covering with the entire class as well as a couple that are unique to each kid. Whole class items will be covered in mini-lessons; individual items will be covered in conferences.

A goal is simply something I want the child to be able to do in the next reporting period. It can be the development of a strength or a specific accomplishment.

The INSTRUCTION Column

This is another easy column for me. All I do is list the instructional techniques I'm going to use to help the student achieve the goals. This can be mini-lesson content, specific activities or assignments, or just a series of conversations I plan to have with a student in conference.

Instruction is what I'm going to do to help students reach their goals.

The SUPPORT Column

This can be tricky but only because we're not used to thinking about it. Many teachers start from the assumption that parents won't help their kids at home, or that they don't know how and won't want to learn. Even though this may be true, it's not a good place to start.

What I do before I write this column is look at the kid and make a vision of what I believe to be the ideal home support system. Then, I write that up in a few short bullet points. I try to treat each parent as though they're all Moms and Dads of the Year. Eventually, most of them start to act that way.

What I know is that in order to grow kids need the following things:

- ★ **Time:** I ask parents to make sure their kids have time to read, write, talk, do homework, etc... And that the time they are putting in is quality time.
- ★ **Choice:** I encourage parents to give their children a range of choices with regard to how they study and do their school work at home.
- ★ **Audience:** I ask parents to be good audiences for their children. I tell them to be curious not corrective when working with their kids, and I stress the role that their approval has in their child's development.
- ★ **Purpose:** I want parents to help their children understand the reasons why we do the things we do. Often, this simply means sharing their own reasons for

doing things. Frankly, it just comes down to being honest and open with children in a way that they can respect and feel comfortable with.

- ★ **Models:** I ask parents to model their own literacy and problem-solving skills, and to include their children in many of the basic adult learning experiences they encounter.
- ★ **Advice:** I caution parents about giving advice to their children with regard to school work. I tell them that they must hold themselves to giving out advice that is TRUE, USEFUL, and UNDERSTANDABLE. And if they're not SURE that what they have to offer their children meets all three of these criteria, then they should simply leave the advice giving to me. One technique I try to teach to every parent is the technique of turning a criticism or a concern into a question. That's a wonderful way to support a learner.

I can offer ideas to parents for support in each of these six categories but I never do all six. I try to limit my advice to three or four crucial things at the most. In the end, I just want parents to spend time with their kids doing simple things like reading or helping them with math. And I always want them to have fun and to make their kids feel loved and very safe.

Writing Plan

SUCSESSES – Things that are going well.	Procedures	Strategies	Qualities
Students averaged 5-6 published pieces each in Q1.	Continue to set tight deadlines.	Have kids put deadlines on TO DO lists; ask them to review deadlines weekly.	
Good variety of forms.			Present more diverse models.
Students love to write.	Stick to 1-hr-a-day schedule; don't miss a day.		
Students love to share.	Begin small group sharing; do more sharing with other classes.	Introduce different ways of sharing.	Create criteria for good sharing.
Everyone published in first class newspaper.	Put out 1 issue per month.		Review professional and student papers.
Everyone knows and uses the Writing Process.	Take status by writing process stage.		Have kids teach WP to 1st graders.; talk about "circular" nature of WP.
Everyone is using their binder.		Continue with monthly binder clean-out.	Create criteria for a good binder.
Students are choosing good topics.		What's a Good Idea?; CPA	Create criteria for good topics.
Many have begun paragraphing.	Require editing pass for paragraphs.	Formalize paragraphing rules.	
Many are beginning to add more detail.	Require 1 detail strategy during writing process.	Review detail strategies.	
Comments I am extremely pleased with how things have gone this first quarter. We've made more progress in nine weeks than we usually make in the whole first semester. I have pushed these kids harder and they have responded. When I consider that they haven't had much experience with workshop-style teaching, the Writing Process, or choosing topics, I'm even more impressed with how far they've come. Shelby's comment last month was very telling: "At first I didn't like this writing because it was too hard. But I'm glad I did it because I can really write now."			

CHALLENGES – Things that need to be improved.	Procedures	Strategies	Qualities
A little too noisy during work time.	Short periods of silent writing.	Use "Are you talking?" self-monitoring; change some seating assignments.	Create criteria for work time.
Carelessness with spelling.	Require spelling edit pass.	More use of Have-A-Go sheets; more emphasis on Word Wall.	Talk more about what good spellers do to check their spelling; create checklist. Introduce spell check on the computer.
Carelessness with periods and caps.	Require separate edit pass.	Expressive reading; reverse conventions reading; review rules for sentence punctuation.	Show models from last year's class.
Inaccurate self-assessment.	Introduce Assessment stage of WP.	Teach Six Traits assessment using sample assessment sets.	ML: What's a good assessment?
Some overly critical commenting during sharing.	Questions only during sharing.	Ask "WHY" and "HOW" questions.	ML: What's a good comment?
Class is getting a bit competitive.	More peer review and editing.		Talk about working together.
Author Pockets are looking shabby.	Require kids to clean up own pockets.		ML: What should your pocket look like?; What kind of work should you put in your pocket?
Comments This group continues to be somewhat of a management challenge. I think I need to be a bit tougher with them. I need to provide a bit more structure for how we behave during work times. I want them to take more pride in their work and in the way they treat each other. They're a rough bunch and at time they are rough on each other. I need to do more to increase the sense of community in the room and to make the kids who are hanging back feel more safe about taking risks.			

NEW STUFF – Things we're going to start on.	Procedures	Strategies	Qualities
Fiction writing.	Require pre-write with 5 Facts of Fiction.	5 Facts of Fiction.	Analyze books w/5 Facts of Fiction.
More advanced book reviews.	Book review checklist.	T-A-D for plot summary.	Analyze models from last year's class.
Commas for separating clauses.		Phrase-by-phrase reading.	Analyze models; Conventions reading.
Apostrophe for possession.		Apostrophe rules.	Analyze models; Conventions reading.
Homonyms.	Require editing pass for homonyms	Use Homonym Word Wall.	Set up Homonym Word Wall
Classroom newspaper editorial staff.	Set up deadlines and editing procedures.		ML: Who works at a newspaper?
Keyboarding.	Set up schedule for typing practice.	Use keyboarding program.	ML: Good typing is slow and accurate.
Punctuating dialog.	Require editing pass for dialog.	Rules for dialog punctuation.	Analyze models; Conventions reading.
Comments I'm very excited about introducing fiction writing using the Five Facts of Fiction. The kids have been clamoring to write stories and now I think they're ready. We'll also be using Five Facts of Fiction in reading and with our book reviews so they should have plenty of chances to get good at it. We're really going to get the newspaper going formally this term. I need to set up the staff and the editorial procedures. I also need to get these kids typing so I don't have to do it for them. Finally, I want them to buckle down and really work hard on their conventions.			

Writing Plan Aligned with Standards for Washington State

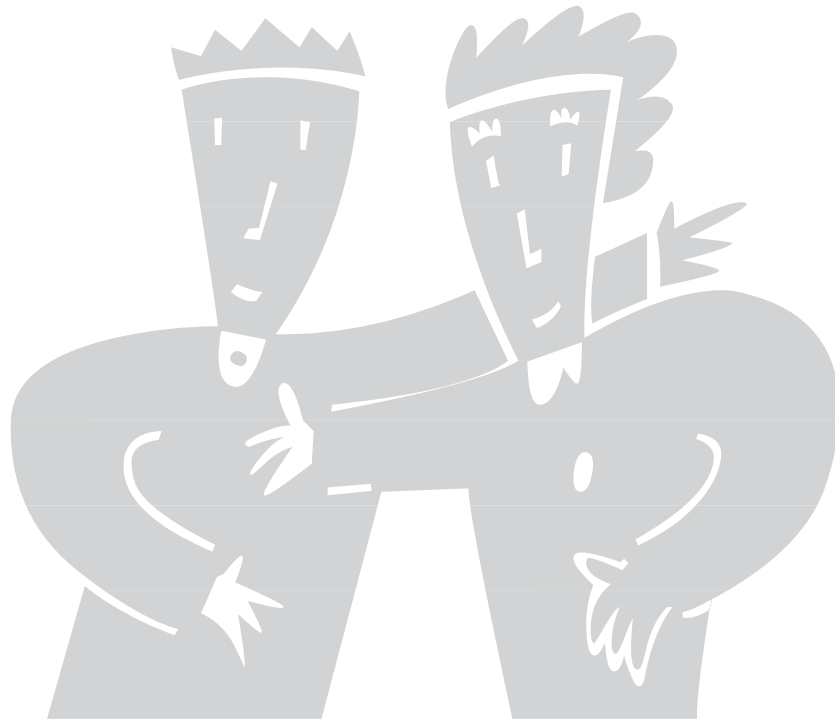
PROCEDURES – Guidelines for the community.	STRATEGIES – Tools for problem solving.	QUALITIES – Standards for good work.
<p>Continue to set tight deadlines. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Stick to 1-hr-a-day schedule; don't miss a day. [None]</p> <p>Begin small group sharing; sharing with other classes. WR 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback. CO 3.1 Uses language to interact effectively with others. CO 3.2 Works cooperatively as a member of a group.</p> <p>Put out one issue per month of class newspaper. WR 2.1 Writes for different audiences. WR 2.2 Writes for different purposes. WR 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Take status by writing process stage. WR 3.1 - WR 3.5. Drafts...Publishes.</p> <p>Require editing pass for paragraphs. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Require one detail strategy during writing process. RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. WR 3.1 Prewrites.</p> <p>Short periods of silent writing. WR 3.2 Drafts.</p> <p>Require spelling edit pass. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Require separate edit pass for periods and caps. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Introduce Assessment stage of the writing process. WR 4.1 Assesses own strengths and needs for improvement. WR 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>Questions only during sharing. CO 1.2 Listens and observes to gain and interpret information. CO 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>More peer review and editing. WR 3.3 Revises. WR 3.4 Edits. CO 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>Require kids to clean up own author pockets. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Require pre-write with "5 Facts of Fiction." RE 1.4 Understands elements of literature: fiction. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. RE 3.3 Reads for literary experience. WR 3.1 Prewrites.</p> <p>Expand book review checklist. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. RE 4.3 Develops interests and shares reading experiences. WR 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms.</p> <p>Require editing pass for homonyms. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Set up deadlines for newspaper and determine production procedures. CO 4.3 Analyzes mass communication. CO 4.4 Analyzes how communication is used in career settings.</p> <p>Set up schedule for typing practice. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Require editing pass for dialog. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Use keyboarding program. WR 2.4 Writes for career applications.</p>	<p>Use "Are you talking?" self-monitoring. CO 1.1 Focuses attention. CO 1.2 Listens and observes to gain and interpret information.</p> <p>More use of Have-A-Go sheets and Word Wall. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p> <p>Expressive reading; reverse conventions reading; re-view rules for sentence punctuation. RE 1.3 Reads fluently, adjusting for purpose and material. RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. RE 3.3 Reads for literary experience. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. CO 2.5 Uses action, sound, and/or images effectively to support presentations.</p> <p>Teach 6-Traits assessment with sample assessment sets. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. WR 4.1 Assesses own strengths and needs for improvement. WR 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>Ask "WHY" and "HOW" questions. CO 1.1 Focuses attention. CO 1.2 Listens and observes to gain and interpret information. CO 1.3 Checks for understanding by asking questions.</p> <p>Have kids put deadlines on TO DO lists; ask them to review deadlines weekly. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Introduce different ways of sharing. CO 1.1 Focuses attention. CO 1.2 Listens and observes to gain and interpret information. CO 2.1 Communicates clearly to a range of audiences.</p> <p>Continue with monthly binder clean-out. [None]</p> <p>What's a Good Idea? WR 1.1 Develops concept and design.</p> <p>Formalize paragraphing rules. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p> <p>Review detail strategies. WR 1.1 Develops concept and design.</p> <p>5 Facts of Fiction. RE 1.4 Understands elements of literature – fiction. RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. RE 2.2 Expands comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. RE 3.3 Reads for literary experience.</p> <p>Content-Purpose-Audience, RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. RE 2.2 Expands comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. RE 3.1 Reads to learn new information.</p> <p>Transition-Action-Details for summary in book reviews. RE 1.4 Understands elements of literature – fiction. RE 4.3 Develops interests and shares reading experiences. WR 1.1 Develops concept and design. WR 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms.</p> <p>Phrase-by-phrase reading. RE 1.3 Reads fluently, adjusting for purpose and material. RE 2.2 Expands comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas.</p> <p>Apostrophe rules. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p> <p>Use Homonym Word Wall. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p> <p>Rules for dialog punctuation. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p>	<p>Create criteria for good sharing. CO 3.2 Works cooperatively as a member of a group. CO 4.1 Assesses strengths and need for improvement.</p> <p>Review writing samples; present diverse models. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze author's use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. WR 2.1 Writes for different audiences. WR 2.2 Writes for different purposes. WR 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms.</p> <p>Have kids teach WP to 1st graders. WR 3.1 – WR 3.5 Drafts...Publishes. CO 2.1 Communicates clearly to a range of audiences. CO 2.4 Uses effective language and style.</p> <p>Create criteria for a good WP binder. WR 3.1 – WR 3.5 Drafts...Publishes.</p> <p>Create criteria for good topics. WR 1.1 Develops concept and design. WR 4.1 Assesses own strengths and needs for improvement. WR 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>Talk about what good spellers do to check their spelling; create checklist. Introduce spell check on computer. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions.</p> <p>Show models from last year's class. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze author's use of language, style, purpose, and perspective. WR 2.1 Writes for different audiences. WR 2.2 Writes for different purposes. WR 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms.</p> <p>ML: What's a good assessment? WR 4.1 Assesses own strengths and needs for improvement.</p> <p>ML: What's a good comment? CO 3.1 Uses language to interact effectively with others. CO 3.3 Seeks agreement and solutions through discussion. CO 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>Talk about working together. CO 4.1 Assesses strengths and need for improvement. CO 4.2 Seeks and offers feedback.</p> <p>ML: What should your pocket look like? What kind of work should you put in your pocket? WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Analyze books w/5 Facts of Fiction. RE 1.4 Understands elements of literature – fiction. RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. RE 2.2 Expands comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas.</p> <p>Transition-Action-Details strategy for plot summary. RE 2.1 Comprehends important ideas and details. RE 2.3 Thinks critically and analyze author's use of language, style, purpose, and perspective.</p> <p>Analyze models; Conventions reading; apostrophes. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Analyze models; Conventions reading; dialog. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Set up Homonym Word Wall WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>ML: Who works at a newspaper? CO 4.3 Analyzes mass communication.</p> <p>ML: Good typing is slow and accurate. WR 3.5 Publishes.</p> <p>Analyze models; Conventions reading; caps and periods. WR 1.3 Applies writing conventions. WR 3.4 Edits.</p> <p>Create criteria for work time. CO 3.2 Works cooperatively as a member of a group.</p>

Writing Instruction

JACQUELINE GRANT	CHRIS STEVENS	ASHLY WRIGHT	MITCH STEWART	NICK EDWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Pre-writing strategies. ___ Project more when reading. ___ Make only the changes she wants to make. ___ Analyze paragraphs. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Idea-Details. ___ Main Idea strategies. ___ Transition-Action-Details. ___ Observe sentence lengths and structures in expressive reading. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Analyze paragraphs. ___ What-Why-How. ___ Idea-Details and Tell-Show. ___ Talk about her writing process. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Conference during pre-writing. ___ Watch commas for periods. ___ Conference during editing. ___ Use editing marks; no re-copy. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Monitor around deadlines. ___ Publish every 2-3 weeks. ___ Monitor during work time. ___ Re-organize binder. ___ Follow directions. Notes:
DERICK SWAN	STEPHANIE KAYDUS	JARED FARMER	ADAM WEISS	KARA RADEBAH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Idea-Details; What-Why-How. ___ Paragraphing with more detail. ___ Conference during pre-writing and drafting. ___ Keep him on task. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Conference more. ___ Set up self monitoring system. ___ Organize binder. ___ Share for her; encourage her to share on her own. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Monitor his listening and work time behavior. ___ Pre-writing strategies. ___ Questioning techniques. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Organize binder. ___ Analyze paragraphs in books. ___ Monitor his listening and work time behavior. ___ Pre-writing strategies. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Binder organization. ___ Prioritize; improve use of time. ___ Basic pre-writing strategies. ___ S-A-F, and Idea-Details. ___ Conference during revision. Notes:
SHELBY PYLE	TRICIA WILSON	KEVIN OLSEN	JACOB LEE	BRANDON TVEDT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ I-D, T-S, W-W-H, S-A-F. ___ Word choice; vocabulary ___ Attitude when sharing. ___ 3 narratives this term. ___ Topics that explore life lessons. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Handwriting practice. ___ Pre-writing strategies. ___ Binder organization. ___ I-D and T-A-D. ___ 3 narratives this term. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Binder organization. ___ Pre-writing help. ___ What-Why-How and Idea-Details. ___ Expressive reading of own pieces. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ S-A-F and Idea-Details ___ Meeting deadlines. ___ More conferences especially near deadlines. ___ 3 narratives this term. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ What-Why-How and Idea-Details. ___ Analyze paragraphs. ___ Editing for spelling. Notes:
JOREY JOHNSON	ERIN COOMES	NICK FORSBERG	GENERAL NOTES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Monitor around deadlines. ___ Use work time efficiently. ___ Binder organization. ___ Paragraphing. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Monitor around deadlines. ___ Use work time efficiently. ___ 3 narratives this term. ___ Peer editor. ___ Begin keyboarding. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Wrist support. ___ Special writing paper. Notes:		
PROCEDURES		STRATEGIES		QUALITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Set tight deadlines. ___ 1 hr. a day for writing. ___ Small group sharing. ___ Cross-class sharing. ___ 1 newspaper a month. ___ Status by WP stage. ___ Edit pass for paragraphs. ___ 1 detail strategy in WP ___ Silent writing. ___ Spelling edit pass. ___ Edit pass: periods + caps ___ Edit pass: dialog. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Deadlines on TO DO lists ___ Review deadlines weekly. ___ Different ways of sharing. ___ Monthly binder clean-out. ___ What's a Good Idea? ___ CPA ___ Paragraphing rules. ___ Detail strategies. ___ Use "Are you talking?" ___ Change seating. ___ Have-A-Go sheets. ___ Keyboarding program. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Word Wall. ___ Expressive reading. ___ Reverse conv. reading. ___ Sentence punctuation. ___ 6T assessment. ___ "Why" and "How" quests. ___ 5 Facts of Fiction. ___ T-A-D for plot summary. ___ Read phrase-by-phrase. ___ Apostrophe rules. ___ Use Homonym Word Wall. ___ Dialog punctuation.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ More diverse models. ___ Criteria for good sharing. ___ Review newspapers. ___ Teach WP to 1st graders. ___ "Circular" nature of WP. ___ Criteria for a good binder. ___ Criteria for good topics. ___ Analyze w/5 F of F. ___ Conv reading: dialog. ___ Conv reading: commas. ___ Conv reading: apostro. ___ Jobs at a newspaper.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Criteria for work time. ___ What good spellers do. ___ Spell check on computer. ___ Models from last year. ___ Good assessments. ___ Good comments. ___ Working together. ___ Good author pockets. ___ Good typing.

Writing Goals

JACQUELINE GRANT	CHRIS STEVENS	ASHLY WRIGHT	MITCH STEWART	NICK EDWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Use I-D and W-W-H strategies. ___ Read pieces expressively. ___ Assert preferences. ___ Improve paragraphing. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Use more detail. ___ Stay focused on topic. ___ Narrative sequencing. ___ Periods and capitals. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Paragraph more consistently. ___ More pre-writing. ___ Write with more detail/depth. ___ Become a classroom leader. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Share earlier in the writing process to avoid re-starts. ___ Capitals and periods. ___ Use editing strategies to avoid complete re-copying/re-writing. ___ Meet deadlines more regularly. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Meet deadlines more regularly. ___ Publish more pieces. ___ Make better use of his time. ___ Keep binder more organized. ___ Follow directions. Notes:
DERICK SWAN	STEPHANIE KAYDUS	JARED FARMER	ADAM WEISS	KARA RADEBAH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Do more prewriting ___ Use more details. ___ Meet deadlines more regularly. ___ Use work time more effectively. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Meet deadlines. ___ Draft and publish more pieces. ___ Use work time more effectively. ___ Organize binder. ___ Follow directions. ___ Share writing voluntarily. ___ Ask good questions in sharing. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Follow directions. ___ Use work time more effectively. ___ More pre-writing: I-D and W-W-H. ___ Ask questions in a respectful tone of voice. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Keep binder more organized. ___ Paragraphing. ___ Follow directions. ___ More pre-writing: I-D and W-W-H. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Keep binder more organized. ___ Follow directions. ___ Ask for help when she is not sure about what to do. ___ More pre-writing. ___ Re-read to eliminate repetition. ___ Re-organize revision. Notes:
SHELBY PYLE	TRICIA WILSON	KEVIN OLSEN	JACOB LEE	BRANDON TVEDT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ More depth and detail. ___ More advanced Word Choice. ___ More enthusiasm when sharing. ___ More personal narrative writing. ___ Attempt more mature topics. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Slow down while writing and improve legibility of handwriting. ___ More pre-writing: I-D and W-W-H. ___ Keep binder more organized. ___ Keep like details together. ___ More personal narrative writing. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Better organizing of binder. ___ Meet deadlines. ___ Use more pre-writing strategies. ___ Share with more confidence; read pieces with expression. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Use more pre-writing strategies to get more detail. ___ Meet deadlines consistently. ___ Improve conventions: particularly periods and caps, spelling. ___ More personal narratives. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Use more pre-writing strategies for details and organization. ___ Begin paragraphing. ___ Improve spelling. ___ Improve grouping of details. Notes:
JOREY JOHNSON	ERIN COOMES	NICK FORSBERG	GENERAL NOTES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Consistently meet deadlines. ___ Use work time more efficiently; get more pieces published. ___ Organize binder. ___ Begin paragraphing. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Meet deadlines consistently. ___ Visit less with other students; use work time more efficiently. ___ More personal narratives. ___ Become a peer editor. ___ Begin typing instruction. Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Make handwriting easier for other people to read. ___ Read pieces more slowly when sharing. ___ Project more when sharing. ___ Answer questions from audience after sharing. Notes:		
SUCCESSES		CHALLENGES	NEW STUFF	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Students averaged 5-6 published pieces each in Q1. ___ Good variety of forms. ___ Students love to write. ___ Students love to share. ___ Everyone published in first class newspaper. ___ Everyone knows and uses the Writing Process. ___ Everyone is using their binder. ___ Students are choosing good topics. ___ Many have begun paragraphing. ___ Many are beginning to add more detail. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ A little too noisy during work time. ___ Carelessness with spelling. ___ Carelessness with periods and caps. ___ Inaccurate self-assessment. ___ Some overly critical commenting during sharing. ___ Class is getting a bit competitive. ___ Author Pockets are looking shabby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Fiction writing. ___ More advanced book reviews. ___ Commas for separating clauses. ___ Apostrophe for possession. ___ Homonyms. ___ Classroom newspaper editorial staff. ___ Keyboarding. ___ Punctuating dialog. 	



Let's work together to
make your teaching
the best it can be.

Please contact me any time!

Even the best workshops and teaching materials can't meet the needs of every teacher all the time.

That's why we need to stay in touch. Send me an e-mail any time you have a question.

*I'll do my best to get back to you quickly with answers, additional teaching materials,
or other resources.*

Please send suggestions, questions, and corrections to:
stevepeha@ttms.org