

Get Real: Instructional Implications for Authentic Writing Activities
Capstone Experience
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ABSTRACT

The teaching of writing is an important part of the elementary school curriculum, yet it remains an area that many teachers are uncomfortable in teaching and students are disinterested in doing. Traditional writing instruction consists of little more than worksheets, essays, read-ink corrections, and student indifference. Student interest in writing begins once students see a real reason for writing. Furthermore, research shows that writing instruction is most effective when it resembles real writing done for real purposes (Duke & Hall, 2006). Therefore, writing instruction in schools should closely model the writing found within real world situations. Authentic writing activities attempt to replicate the writing that students experience in the world.

Authentic writing activities in the writing curriculum are often described as “fun” or “motivating.” However, pinning down a firm definition of authentic writing is a little more difficult since it has been described in numerous ways. Studies show that effective authentic writing instruction generally includes student choice, the presence of an audience, the creation of a product, attention to writing genres, and an evident purpose for writing among other important factors. Writing authentically in the classroom requires marked attention to instructional implications since authenticity deals primarily with what is taught and how it is taught.

Teachers that use authentic writing activities find that their students experience greater growth in the ability to write and comprehend new genres (Purcell-Gates & Duke, 2004). Students also enjoy what they are doing and are not only motivated to write but are more successful in doing so.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

“When our students resist writing, it’s usually because writing has been treated as little more than a place to display- to expose- their command of spelling, penmanship, and grammar (Calkins, 1994).” The resistance that Lucy Calkins describes has become an all too real problem in many schools. With the ever present pressures to teach the testable aspects of learning, writing education has taken a backseat to other forms of literacy. What has resulted is a condensed, worksheet heavy version of writing, one that involves little more than instruction on correct grammar and spelling. It is no wonder that so many students resist writing. However, writing instruction does not have to be this way. Regie Routman suggests that students begin to view writing differently “when [they] see how we use writing in our lives (Routman, 2000).” What Routman describes is an authentic view on writing education. She continues by declaring the “absolute necessity of writing for a purpose and audience (Routman, 2000).” Studies performed by Duke and Hall (2006) find many benefits from authentic literacy activities. They found that teachers who included more of these types of activities had students who showed higher growth in comprehension and writing. Duke and Hall also noted that many teachers attest to the power of authentic literacy activities and that students came alive when they realized they were writing to real people for real reasons or reading real-life texts for their own purposes (Duke & Hall, 2006). Considering the benefits, one must question why in spite of the recommendations for authentic writing programs, writing is still being taught in less meaningful, worksheet-laded, writing prompt-imposed ways. One may assume that one problem is that schools are unaware of the complete definition of authentic writing and the implications of such a program. The purpose of this paper is to better

explain the various views of authentic writing instruction as well as investigate instructional implications for teachers, learners, learning, and the environment.

DEFINITION OF THE ISSUE

“To many teachers, authentic literacy means reading and writing that is unlike the kind done in school (Duke & Hall, 2006).” This simple definition captures the contrast of authentic literacy with the type of literacy traditionally taught in schools. The most general definition of authentic writing is writing that is real. Real writing includes a variety of writing styles, purposes, audiences, contexts, and products. Authentic writing instruction in schools attempts to model writing found in everyday life and what real writers do within the writing process. According to Lucy Calkins, writing must begin with purpose. She explains saying, “We cannot teach writing well unless we trust that there is a real, human reason to write (Calkins, 1994).” Students must see this real, human reason behind their writing if they are going to engage in the writing process. Routman continues along this same thought stating that “our writing forms and audiences are determined by our needs, purposes, and interests. Our student’s writing should and can reflect the same authenticity, even with the bounds of required curriculum and standards (2000).” Therefore, writing instruction should begin with a desire and need to write. It is this step that is so often missed within school writing curriculums. Real writing is possible within current curriculums and standards despite excuses that instruction should focus solely on the aspects of writing that will be tested.

From the conception of an idea through the process of creating meaning all the way down to finishing with a product, authentic writing follows all the same steps as any

type of functional writing. Completely defining authentic writing within a school context is somewhat complicated because what it means to use an authentic writing program means different things to different people. Within research, there are multiple definitions used to describe authentic writing. Before one can determine how to best teach writing authentically, one must examine the main components of an authentic writing program.

Writing for an audience/creating a product for an audience. When writing authentically, students should develop a sense of audience and an understanding of how to prepare writing to go into the world (Ray, 2001). When designing an authentic writing program, the teacher must in the beginning show students that what they write will be read. Each authentic literacy activity has a writer and a reader- a writer who is writing to a real reader and a reader who is reading what the writer wrote (Duke & Hall, 2006). The concept of audience is an essential part of Duke and Hall's work on authentic writing programs. They state that, "Audience is generally agreed to be a critical aspect of writing process and product...outside of instructional context, literate people almost always write only if there is a reader for their writing, even if (in the case of journal or personal memo writing) the reader is the writer (Duke & Hall, 2006)." In the majority of classrooms, students serve the double duty of both writer and audience. The writing that they produce is usually read only themselves or the teacher. However, students need their writing to reach a wider audience. Teachers many arrange for writing to reach an extended audience. In reaching larger audiences, student writing should reflect the purpose which is to provide information for someone who wants or needs it—in addition to teaching particular skills or content (Duke & Hall, 2006)."

Writing with Purpose. To reiterate Lucy Calkins, “We cannot teach writing well unless we trust that there is a real, human reason to write (1994).” For many student writers, the goal of real writing is to “replicate and reflect reading and writing activities that occur in the lives of people outside of a learning-to-read-and-write context and purpose (Duke & Hall, 2006).” They learn to write by imitating the writing that they see in the world around them. Writing is situational and must match a purpose, function or context that best expresses the writer’s intent. For students to begin authentic writing, they must see purpose in what they are doing. Additionally, as teachers instruct students on how to craft their writing, it is most authentic when teachers are able to teach directly to what the students are doing. Duke and Hall found in their work that, “Language learning occurs best when the learning context matches the real functional context (Duke & Hall, 2006).” Observing student work and then extracting the teachable moments infuses richness into the instruction. Students will benefit from teachers who take what they are doing and make it even better.

Writing with motivation. “When asked to define authentic literacy, the vast majority of preservice and inservice teachers respond with notions of ‘interesting or motivating,’ ‘relevant topics,’ or ‘fun (Duke & Hall, 2006).” Authentic writing is usually enjoyable for students because it gives them a reason to write. Unauthentic writing methods usually consist of contrived writing situations or prompts. When writing authentically, students are generally more motivated because real writing involves audience, a variety of genres and styles, a product, and choice.

Writing through genres. One of the most significant aspects of authentic writing is connecting students with a variety of text styles and formats. Since writing occurs for a variety of purposes, one may assume that these purposes are best suited for writing in an assortment of ways.

“Before we can teach our students how to write in a particular genre, we need to immerse them in the reading and writing of actual texts in that genre (Routman, 2000). Routman also suggests that when teaching genres, schools need to come to an agreement on which genres will be taught in which grade level and how each particular genre will be taught (2000). Just as experiencing different genres is essential to authentic literacy programs, Duke and Hall believe that “authentic experience is essential to genre and discourse learning (Duke & Hall, 2006).” The two go hand in hand. Overall, experiencing authentic writing activities will result in a greater growth in the ability to write new genres (Purcell-Gates & Duke, 2004).

Writing to create a product. When writing for an audience, it is very important to produce a product. Additionally, products are something in which students can be proud. When experimenting with different authentic writing styles, the product should match whatever it is that the student is creating so that it serves a true communicative purpose. For instance, if a student is working on letter writing, he or she should actually produce a letter and mail it to complete the authentic process.

Writing with choice. “Authentic writing is often defined as writing on topics of one’s choice, which can take the form of a personal narrative or story (Duke & Hall, 2006).” Adding in the element of choice boosts motivation. Students write with more interest and passion if they have a choice in what they are producing.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Enabling students to write from an authentic perspective requires an environment that is conducive to this form of writing. Good authentic writing practices are aligned with overall good writing practices. Regie Routman encourages several ways to create an effective writing environment. First, she suggests that the teacher organize for writing by scheduling and adequately “housing” for writing (Routman, 2000). Evidence of writing should be visible around the room. Teachers may post word walls, have resources such as dictionaries readily available and showcase many types of environmental print (Routman, 2000). Some teachers may opt to use forms to organize daily writing experiences with forms such as daily writing records that require students to quickly jot down in a sentence what they worked on that day in writing workshop (Routman, 2000). Fletcher and Portalupi suggest that the wall space of the classroom reflect the same organization and routine (2001). As part of their “look on the walls” approach, Fletcher & Portalupi propose that reminders are kept on the walls to help students remember teaching (2001). In one example, a teacher hung a chart labeled “How Can I Help?” which included the names of all the students in the class. Beside each name was a writing strength of the student. If someone needed help in a particular area, they could look at the chart and find a person who could help them. By looking at the walls in the classroom, visitors should be able to enter the room and by “reading” the room, they should be able to see that writing is taking place and the value of that writing (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). Environmental arrangements such as the provided examples demonstrate an authentic approach to writing instruction. In “real” writing, students must become familiar with their ready-made resources. Naturally, one of the best resources is

other people. Likewise, pulling information about writing from the environment is a helpful strategy. A textbook or worksheet cannot offer this level of support inside or outside of the classroom.

As previously discussed, the element of audience is essential to a class' authentic writing program. Teachers may need to manipulate writing situations where audience is apparent. By setting up audiences, student will see the real and authentic purpose for writing. Routman suggests that students give writing as a gift and then share audience reactions as a way to increase the quality of the end result through the use of audience (Routman, 2000). While story writing is a completely valid form of authentic writing, teachers may encourage variety by introducing a vast array of formats. Student-created information may be presented in many real forms of magazines, brochures, picture books, newspapers, diaries, scrapbooks, videotapes, reference books, debates, skits, exhibitions, big books, interactive/manipulative books, speeches and more (Routman, 2000). Likewise, traditional 8 ½ X 11-inch pages bound together are not the way that real books are formatted, and bound together pages may prove to be inadequate in all writing circumstances since student products take so many different forms. Product innovation should be encouraged to match the authentic purpose and result.

One of the basic principles of education is to expect differences. Students differ in their interests, strengths, levels of attainment, and certainly in their learning behaviors. Therefore, teachers must expect to teach a whole class of very different writers (Ray, 2001). Just as the writing format will vary to include authentic experiences, instruction should also match in authenticity. Teaching authentically means meeting students where they are and teaching them from that place. This point significantly affects the learning

environment. Katie Wood Ray believes that “the teaching of writing should revolve around strategies techniques, and understandings that aren’t connected to specific material. The teaching should be tied to a certain kind of material (genre) but is still doesn’t need to be tied to a topic (2001).” To accommodate such diversity, teachers must employ various grouping strategies within the classroom environment. In this type of classroom, one should expect to see students working on a variety of skills and projects independently, in pairs, in small groups, and sometimes in a whole class assortment.

LEARNERS AND LEARNING

Writing is a social process for most writers (Roser & Bomer, 2005). It is a device intended for communication, and it is essential that students take interest in what they are writing. However, teachers generally struggle with student interest in writing. Some educators theorize that this disinterest can be countered with writing instruction that takes student preferences into account. Many times, literacy in school is not similar to the literacies experienced in the real world. Specifically in writing, students may lack a clear purpose in relation to school-based writing. Routman advises that “students have to care about their writing to write well, and they care about things in which they are interested (2000).” Likewise, within the social setting of writing, students must have an opportunity to confer with others about their ideas (Rog, 2007). Other students can become great assets to the authentic writing process. Like real writing done by published authors, student writing can become authentic by following the same social processes through writing discussions.

Research has found that most students, even children from low socio-economic status groups, are regularly exposed to a variety of print in their homes and communities (Duke & Purcell-Gates, 2003). However a mismatch between home and school environments may be the cause of literacy difficulties. Work by Ervin-Tripp found evidence of children's early development of genre knowledge (1973). In this context, genre is defined by Duke and Purcell-Gates as patterns in the way language is used (2003). Considering what is known about children and their knowledge of genre, Duke and Purcell-Gates conducted a study with elementary students from low socio-economic backgrounds and found that the most common, overlapping writing formats between home and school environments were storybooks, lists and individual words and letters (2003). School genres such as worksheets, charts, poems, journals, and individual sentences were notably absent in the home, whereas genres commonly found in homes were names, labels, newspapers, game-related print, letters, and biblical text. As seen in this scenario, genre is one heuristic for thinking about and connecting the culturally based conceptions of reading and writing. Consideration to writing genres and formats would respond to the mismatch between home and school literacies.

Theories of learning have long concluded that children learn new skills better when connected to familiar ones (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). Likewise, bringing familiar genres into the classroom contexts not only provides strong connections to new learning, but the presense of a familiar text eases the cognitive load. When working with familiar, authentic texts, the learner is using a context in which new skills and knowledge can be "bridged" more completely and easily (Duke & Purcell Gates, 2003).

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

“In many ways, the term [authentic literacy] is a pedagogical one. People who are not involved with issues of instruction do not use it (Duke & Hall, 2006).”

Duke and Hall’s work on authentic literacy activities mainly focuses on instructional implications since taking an authentic perspective on literacy begins with making instructional changes. In considering instructional implications, the areas of most importance are related to the actual teaching time (preferably done through minilessons), instruction through modeling, and the teaching of writing skills and grammar.

Donald Graves (1983) emphasizes three main components of writing instruction: (1) time, (2) ownership, and (3) response.

Students need adequate time for writing each day. At a minimum, writing workshop should occur for thirty minutes daily (Rog, 2007). Authentic writing lessons can be arranged just like other writing lessons within the writing workshop. Depending on what is being taught, lessons may be full length or in the abbreviated minilesson form. Each day, writing begins with a skill lesson. Depending upon the daily topics for the class, small groups, or individual students, the teacher will decide grouping arrangements and activities in the minilesson. In Lori Rog’s model, in these 5-10 minute “brief and focused” minilessons, teachers take one of the four forms of writing instruction: modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, or guided writing (2007). Other minilesson models contend that writing instruction be determined on a day-to-day basis and can be as short as several minutes or as long as fifteen to twenty minutes (Routman, 2000).

Minilessons are instructional contexts used to demonstrate craft and conventions. While students are asked to try out the strategy from the minilesson, they are not

necessarily expected to use that strategy later that day when writing is resumed (Calkins, 1994). Students will all be at different places in their writing. In order to keep writing activities authentic, teachers will need to teach to what students are doing or what they need to know. Lucy Calkins, an expert on writing lesson design, states that while the purpose of minilessons will vary, the procedures will probably be quite consistent (1994). Overall, Calkins sees minilessons as an instructional time designed “to provide writerly conversations, a time for talking about procedural issues, and a forum for demonstrating writing strategies (1994).”

Donald Graves’ second component of quality writing instruction is ownership (1983). Educators commonly agree that interest in writing is not immutable or something a person is born with. Rather, interest is nurtured. Student interest in writing is important because students who are interested are more likely to develop a sophisticated understanding of writing, set writing goals, make use of strategies, and seek feedback from their writing (Lipstein & Renninger, 2007). In a study, Lipstein and Renninger (2007) found that students fit into four categories based on their interest in writing. Within each category, students may require different instructional approaches that foster growing interest. Through the stages, students may require concrete strategy instruction, individual feedback, peer and teacher conferences and whole class instruction that encourages students to find their voice as well as instruction that focuses on audience awareness (Lipstein & Renninger, 2007). Authentic writing activities increase student interest and motivation because authentic activities replicate naturally occurring texts where purpose and function are immediately evident.

Student interest in writing is also closely tied to the choice of topic and format. Even though the teacher may decide upon certain parameters, student writing does not and should not be tied to a specific topic (Ray, 2001). However, along with this element of choice, teachers must scaffold students by modeling expectations, allowing time for practice, and providing feedback. Teacher modeling in particular is an effective instructional tool for authentic writing. By sharing personal pieces of writing (letters, postcards, drafts, poems, and anything from a desk drawer at home) teachers show students that writing is connected to the world, not just school (Routman, 2000).

When one thinks of traditional writing instruction, a common image that comes to mind is a written essay splashed in red ink grammar corrections. Indeed, attention to grammar is an important aspect of writing because it enables the writer to better communicate his or her message; however, one must question how much a student actually learns from a product covered in corrections. Since teachers must support students overall writing development, teaching the conventions of writing is also a necessity.

Authentic writing instruction makes grammar skill instruction more meaningful. When grammar is taught within its naturally occurring context, students make better use of conventions of grammar than if learned only within isolation (Weaver, 1998). Furthermore, taking a constructivist approach to writing encourages the continual practice of grammar skills as done in authentic writing and in contrast to traditional writing models where students practice grammar skills in isolation (Weaver, 1998). Scott Peterson (1998) comments further by stating that “knowledge acquired within the context

of a meaningful writing activity, on the other hand, has a much better chance of being used and retained (p. 75).”

ASSESSMENT

The third and final component of writing instruction according to Donald Graves is response (1983). In effective writing programs, students must have time for response to their writing. Reflection is a key component because only through reflection can students learn from their writing experiences and better plan future writing. Researchers and educators alike agree upon the importance of writing conferences as a way to respond to writing. Conferencing is a very informal way to reflection upon and assess the way students are developing as writers as well as determine what needs to be coached in further lessons and interactions. It stands in sharp contrast to the way that many people remember writing assessment in schools where corrections were made upon written pieces by teachers with what appeared to be a leaking red pen.

Conferencing with students is a very authentic practice since it follows the same routine that real writers take. It gives students and teachers the opportunity to interact one-on-one. The act of a personal discussion about writing replaces written comments in a margin and produces change that could never happen through leaky red pens (Routman, 2000). Fletcher and Portalupi praise conferences in saying that, “Good things happen when writers are able to articulate what they are doing and why (Fletcher and Portalupi, 2001).” They continue by listing some of the fundamental parts of a conference. According to Fletcher and Portalupi, teachers must: listen, be present as a reader,

understand the writer, follow the student's energy, build on strengths, and teach at least one thing (2001).

The number one principle behind assessment is to evaluate instruction. Student products combined with student conferences form a well rounded portrait of progress. In assessing the product of an authentic text, the text must match its purpose and reach its intended audience. By definition to be authentic, the text must be written for authentic purposes (Duke and Hall, 2006). Assessing products may be either informal or formal (in combination with rubrics), however, it is of most importance to assess student growth in relation to the usage of the particular genre or text type being used (Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau, 2007).

RATIONALE FOR THE CURRICULUM

To demonstrate the learned principles about authentic writing instruction, I created a curriculum for a classroom newspaper. A class newspaper is an authentic form of writing that enables students to write for an audience, learn a variety of formats, and write about issues that are important to them. Additionally, newspapers are formats that students experience across home and school settings which is important according to the work done by Duke and Purcell-Gates (2003).

Rather than writing hypothetical lesson plans for an imaginary group of children, I made the task authentic for myself by actually working with a real group of children in a classroom setting at the University School of Nashville. In my curriculum, I taught a class of 18 students how to create and implement a classroom newspaper. One of the basic principles for teaching writing authentically is to teach within the context of student interest. It would not be realistic to assume that an authentic writing curriculum could be pre-made for a group of students. By nature, that is in conflict with the design of authentic writing. So, my personal task was to authentically plan and implement a curriculum that would teach real writing to a group of students.

In developing my lessons, I drew from the work of many researchers and professional writers. A majority of my individual theory on authentic writing came from the work done by Duke and Hall (2006) and Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau (2007). The researchers encourage instruction for authentic literacy activities to fit into four categories: hands-on demonstrations, teachable moments, topic announcements, and discrepant events. They also emphasize authentic literacy as part of problem solving, literacy in response to community need, and audience as integral to authentic writing.

The presence of a problem provides strong motivation and purpose for finding a solution. As problems arise or are arranged, the class may design authentic solutions. For example, in the situation of a class newspaper, the students may see the need for more home-school communication or else they may perceive the problem as the need for their voices to be more strongly represented in communication of what is going on in their classroom.

Once a problem is identified and students are motivated with a purpose, they begin to examine real examples of what they are going to produce. Reading and writing are closely related authentic literacy activities. Students must first experience the context in which they will be working. As the instruction occurs, the teacher may decide to use hands-on demonstrations or topic announcements with students. He or she will teach by doing as well as navigating the known. Using the example of our classroom newspaper, as the students continued to experience the genre they were working in, they became curious about the various ways in which it works. We began simply by observing real newspapers. Students took time to authentically read before producing the written product. In this particular curriculum, there were many different parts of a newspaper that students could learn. As they show interest, the teacher must take advantage of the teachable moments as they present themselves. This principle is essential in the instruction of authentic writing.

Another resource heavily represented in my curriculum is the work of Regie Routman. Her work on writing instruction is very practical for teachers. In one particular example, she wrote about another teacher's experience with implementing a classroom newspaper and offers the following four points for students: (1) think about

what you are writing because there is a big audience, (2) you want to make a good impression, (3) you know your parents will read it, and you want them to say ‘I love it,’ and (4) it is a good type of pressure because a lot of people are reading it, so you want to do your best (2000). Audience in an authentic writing perspective is crucial, especially within the format of a classroom newspaper.

Other instructional implications for the curriculum came from the work of Katie Wood Ray especially pertaining to the structure of instruction within the writing workshop and minilessons. She five principles for teaching writing that she endorses includes: strategies (ways to do things), techniques (ways to fashion things), questions (ways to think about things), relationships (ways to connect things), and conventions (ways to expect things) (Ray, 2001). These principles guide instruction by highlighting the way a learner learns as well as how the instructional environment should operate.

Overall, to reiterate the work of Duke and Hall, the purpose and function for authentic writing is to provide information for someone who wants or needs it—in addition to teaching particular skills or content (2006). This point fueled the language of the curriculum as students produced their authentic texts, and it served as a strong motivator for their continued work and enthusiasm in the project.

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Part II: Authentic Writing Curriculum
Launching a Classroom Newspaper

Curriculum Implementation

All the lessons from this curriculum have been developed for and used by a classroom of second graders at the University School of Nashville. I began the project with no idea of how to set-up a classroom newspaper. I scoured the internet for lessons and ideas on student-created newspapers. I was advised early on to begin with a real newspaper. Later, as I researched authentic writing instruction more intensely, I learned more about the principles of this type of instruction. The principles then guided all of the activities I planned as well as the way I began to interact with the students.

This project started in September. Along the way, I tried many ideas. Of course, some worked better than others. In the classroom that I worked with, I worked weekly with a small group of students ranging from 4 to 8 kids per week. Other times, I worked with the entire class to produce the newspaper. Early on, the feedback from the administration and parents was positive. The students themselves were very enthusiastic to see their words in such an official print. Over the past few months, I have heard from various parents how the kids love sharing their newspaper at home and usually ask to keep the weekly papers in “special boxes.”

Our classroom newspaper has evolved many times over the past few months. We have done special thematic editions when the idea seemed to fit. For instance, after the medieval unit, we decided that a medieval version of the classroom newspaper would be a great culminating idea. The students worked very hard on their paper and the result was fantastic! Other classes admired their work and a couple of other second grade classrooms decided to do a medieval newspaper as well.

The newspaper curriculum I created is a result of reflective planning. The included lessons are not in their original form. Instead, I altered them based upon my

experience teaching them. So, the following lessons are a collection of what I think would work best. Of course, authentic instruction cannot follow a prescribed list of objectives and activities. Instead, the instruction should be tailored to individual students and their needs. However, it is helpful to have some sort of a plan. It is suggested that these lessons serve as starting points.

As I reflect upon my experience with the classroom newspaper, I like to look at individual student achievement. While many students showed obvious growth, Drew Dibble's writing flourished within the newspaper project. The newspaper format enabled him to work within an authentic format that he would not otherwise have the chance to develop within school. Drew is a great student and a sports fanatic. His enthusiasm for and understanding of sports (particularly football) is at a level higher than most students his age. When choosing his tasks for the newspaper, he consistently chose the sports section. What he produced is quite impressive. Not only does he enjoy writing about football, but he is able to write in a format in which he extremely successful. The quality of his writing in sports reports continues to blow all of our readers away. I was stunned one week to read his Superbowl analysis. He wrote two complete pages (front and back) using only his own knowledge of the game without any outside sources. Being able to write about the football game gave Drew (a future sports writer in my own biased opinion) an outlet to practice a format that he enjoyed and could learn from. Drew's mother shared with me praise for the project. She told me that it meant so much to Drew to be able to share his love of sports since it is something that he is good at and really enjoys.

Overall, the entire capstone curriculum experience as been great for the students and myself. I have seen tremendous growth throughout the year in the variety of writing styles in which they are capable as well as the development of other crucial writing skills. All the while, they have maintained a steady level of enthusiasm. Each week when a new newspaper group is selected, I hear excited chatter of those who was chosen. With this type of response, I need no other amount of persuasion to implement a classroom newspaper in my own future classrooms.

Goals

- Move from classroom information into community information
- Increase to a wider audience- allow time in class to read, send home for parents, give to another class to read, "requests" for an organization
- Student ownership and transition from teacher leadership to student leadership
- Keep student enthusiasm for the project- MOTIVATION
- What students learn about in newspaper minilessons can be transferred to other forms of writing
- Align minilesson topics with what students are wanting to know, improving frequently used formats, and match with current classroom units of study.
- Assessment- assessing student use of writing techniques in their articles and planning instruction with this knowledge.
- Improve newspaper writing techniques from week to week. Resist the status quo through minilessons that strengthen skills that the students are interested in and developing.
- Use the newspaper format as a way to experiment with multiple genres and text types.
- My personal goal: To develop a curriculum that can be used by my peers and adapted into their own classrooms. This curriculum will be used as an upcoming guide for the classroom that I designed and implemented the lessons for.

Arrangement of Lessons and Newspaper Creation

The lessons in the curriculum vary in the amount of time it takes to teach the concepts. Some lessons may take an entire writing period while others are taught as minilessons taking anywhere between five to twenty minutes to teach. In my own experience, I focused on only one or two skills a week. Most times, the lessons would occur on only one or two days through the week. All other days, the students worked on the skills they are learning and/or creating another individual newspaper piece using the skills they are developing. I gave the students a large degree of freedom in choosing the formats that wanted to work in. Encouraging choice is a great way to keep student motivation while allowing them to try new ideas. Many times they would observe a skill or format used in the newspaper and try to imitate it. As I noticed the ways they were working and the decisions they were making, I would design minilessons to help strengthen their work. For example, as I saw that many children were creating their own newspaper advertisements, I decided to teach a formal lesson on professional advertisements. All instructional decisions were made to increase the authenticity of what the students were doing and the choices they were making. Over time, their final newspaper products evolved into a wider array of formats.

The curriculum is designed in such a way that the entire class is learning the general structure in the beginning three sections. The following lessons were created to fulfill student interest and areas of pursuit. Therefore, after the first three lessons, the following section of curriculum could be taught in a different order. However, it is important to consider what students know before proceeding into a certain genre or topic. Additionally, this curriculum could be modified for other grade levels. I chose to

use the second grade standards since I was working with second graders. Class newspapers are popular in many grade levels. They have been in elementary schools all the way through high schools. Of course, the instruction and formats will change, but the basic principles and ideas remain the same.

The lessons in the curriculum are ones that I focused on with my group of students; however, there are many other lesson topics that I taught one on one with students. The following list shows more completely what I worked on with individual or small groups of students as they showed interest:

Other possible topics

1. How to write cartoons
2. Finding Your Voice
3. Creating puzzles
4. Lists- top 10 lists or such that can be seen
5. Quizzes (great starter for outlines)
6. Weather reports and forecasts
7. Smaller sections such as: food section- recipes, fashion, movie reviews
8. Thematic newspaper editions- write a page on how to do this including goals and instructional implications. With thematic editions, like *The Medieval Times*, students are allowed more choice to demonstrate their learning on the topic rather than producing a true classroom newspaper. Thematic editions of the class newspaper are great tools for assessment because students are free to write whatever they want in the format that they choose to demonstrate their learning on the subject. For example, in *The Medieval Times*, students choose formats with which they were most comfortable or those that would enable them to write about the topic that they desire. What results is an eclectic compilation for information that students have learned about the topic and newspaper formats that they are "playing with." Students may also use the class newspaper as a medium for displaying their work from writer's workshop. Some students will choose to include a story or poem. Special literary magazine editions of the classroom newspaper may be created to display student work. Literary magazine formats are very flexible. In this curriculum, students wrote an edition of poetry as well as an edition of "Seuss-like" writings and illustrations.
9. Grammar Minilessons- Learning grammar can become more meaningful within the authentic context of a classroom newspaper. If the teacher identifies an area that needs more practice (with an individual, small group, or whole class), he or she may schedule a minilesson that teaches that skill. Students should be able to see that by using the new skill, their newspaper writing can be improved. After each lesson, students should be challenged to use the skill in their writing.

Lesson Plan: Launching a Classroom Newspaper 1 to 2 Weeks

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	<p>The following standards (with a strong emphasis on product) will be reiterated throughout the entire newspaper curriculum:</p> <p>TLW select a focus for writing 2.2.01d TLW use technology to publish writing. 2.2.06c TLW share completed work 2.2.06d TLW incorporate photographs or illustrations in written works. 2.2.06b TLW prepare a variety of written work. 2.2.06a TLW write for a variety of purposes. 2.2.11afe TLW write to entertain and inform. 2.2.02bc</p>
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals		
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Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	<p>Launching a newspaper may take a week or two. Students will need to gain a great deal of knowledge about the purpose of a newspaper and its general structure before they can begin to create their own version. The lessons within this portion of the curriculum may be taught over the course of several days or weeks depending upon teacher discretion. These lessons include different activities that may be used to launch the newspaper.</p>
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	<p>In my classroom, most students come from homes where their parents subscribe to a newspaper. The students were also familiar with the grade level newsletter that is sent home by classroom teachers. Additionally, the students have read different children's books where newspapers have been referenced.</p>

Assessment		
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Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	<p>The students have never been involved in a project like this before. They are familiar with they newspapers that their parents read and have looked through them before. In school, each grade level is required to send home a weekly newsletter to parents. In the second grade, two students from each class serve as a reporter weekly. These students write a brief summary of an important event from the week. Beginning this project, only a handful of students had had the opportunity to be a class reporter since it was so early in the year. Starting our own newspaper, a majority of the students had a clear understanding of the purpose of a newspaper. They knew many of the basic principles. However, they were less knowledgeable about the various formats that a newspaper could take.</p>	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	<p>The launching phase will be purely observational. The teacher will note areas of strength as well as areas that could serve as upcoming minilesson topics.</p>	<p>Informal assessment</p>

Student Grouping	
Pre-Teaching	<p>How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?</p> <p>Throughout the lessons in this portion of the project, the teacher may take advantage of a variety of groupings. The beginning, formative lessons will require class-wide participation, whereas some of the activities will be more effective in small groups or individual groupings. When developing a vision for our class newspaper, discussions should be kept as whole group.</p>
Learning Activities	
Pre-Teaching	<p>What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.</p> <p>Learning about a newspaper takes much longer than one day, week, month or year. Students can be reminded that even college students choose to learn even more about newspapers through journalism majors. Therefore, we cannot expect students to learn all there is to know about newspapers within a few lessons. Rather, the entire year should be treated as a learning experience. In the beginning, it is most important to start with the basics. Students should be given the flexibility to learn at their own pace within areas of most interest.</p> <p><u>What is a Newspaper?</u> This lesson is the basic, introductory lesson that serves as a jumping off point. Students will learn the purpose behind a newspaper as well as ways to design its structure. Begin by starting a conversation (and listing responses) about the purpose of a newspaper. In this discussion, they should mention or be directed into a conversation about the importance of an audience. Many of the following lessons within this curriculum may also begin with a discussion on purpose for whatever minilesson is being taught. Students should also determine the basic principles behind a newspaper. They should know that in writing articles for a newspaper is a big responsibility. Newspapers are truthful, organized, and current. As a class, additional principles can be discussed along with purpose.</p> <p><u>What Does a Newspaper Look Like?</u> The best way for students to answer this question is to actually look at a newspaper. Many copies should be made available during the launching as well as throughout the year for students to look at. They can examine local newspapers, national level, kids versions, etc. Many different types should be showcased (The Tennessean, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Knoxville News Sentinel, The Mini Pages etc.). The adult versions may be somewhat overwhelming for younger students. Encourage them to simply observe. They don't need to read every newspaper word for word. Easier, child friendly papers should also be displayed. Children's magazines can also be displayed because they include great examples of articles and other formats that can be used. As the students examine, they will be asked to identify some of the main sections of the newspaper. In our class version, we will make sure to include the front page, sports, local news, business, and entertainment sections. This, of course, can be adjusted to reflect student interest and choice. Each section will be modified to a school/classroom level. So, for instance, the local news would be news from our classroom and the business section would be the general information for our class, school, or community.</p> <p><u>Vocabulary</u> It is important to introduce common vocabulary. With my students, I found it easiest to call the pieces they were working on their "stories" or "articles." I also referred to "format" as the way students were going to organize their information. There are many formats in a newspaper. Students may choose to write an informational text or they may want to use other formats such as advice columns, weather reports, quizzes, surveys, interviews, recipes, comics, book, movie and music reviews, crossword puzzles, fashion articles, photography with</p>

		<p>captions, countdown lists, student profiles (Meet _____), advertisements, sports scores, advice columns, and the list goes on. At the end of the curriculum there is a selection of format pages that can be helpful for students as they select their individual projects.</p> <p><u>Observation</u> More than anything, students need to observe and study newspapers. They need to have a lot of experience looking at newspapers. The following activities are designed to serve that purpose. Guess the Section Take a real paper and cut out stories from different sections. We will go through the stories and by looking at topics and titles, we will sort them into sections they belong in. Newspaper Scavenger Hunt This activity can be adapted many ways. Students can be asked to find certain words, phrases or sections that they can cut out or circle. Commercial scavenger hunt books are also in print. Newspaper Art In this fun activity, students can cut and paste parts of the newspaper onto paper to create art. This activity can also be adapted into a literacy activity where students can cut out letters (ransom note style) to create words from the word wall.</p> <p><u>Naming the Paper</u> This minilesson will be very special because it is the last step before actually starting the paper. Based upon observed examples, students can begin to suggest names for our class newspaper. Suggested names will be written on the board. Students will then vote for their top choice(s). Each teacher may decide how to conduct the voting.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple copies of a variety of newspapers- USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Tennessean, school papers from other grades, grade level newsletters, Mini Pages, etc. • scavenger hunt pages and directions • glue • cardboard or cardstock paper • chart paper or whiteboard for listings

Lesson Plan: Writing Newspaper "Stories" /Articles Two to Three Days

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	TLW select a focus for writing 2.2.01d TLW write to entertain and inform. 2.2.02bc TLW write accounts of personal experiences. 2.2.07b
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals		
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Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	Students will learn what makes news stories "newsworthy" and write their own news articles using the 5W's.	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	During the first part of this unit, students observed many newspapers. They have a solid, basic knowledge of the purpose of newspapers. By this point, they are excited to write their first newspaper stories and produce their first class newspaper.	

Assessment		
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Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	The students in this classroom are well rehearsed in topic selection. However, the topics for the newspaper will be slightly different from story topic selection typically done in the classroom. Additionally, this project will require students to reflect upon the factor of audience. They have created projects in the past for an audience, but have not done so with the purpose of relating information.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	All students will submit their first newspaper story using a report guide that takes them through the steps of planning a newsworthy newspaper article. In the activities preceding the written article, students will discuss newspaper articles. The teacher will identify students that need additional support and provide them with the individual or small group help they need before the culminating activity.	Informal assessment

Student Grouping		
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Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	The first minilesson will be taught whole group since all students will benefit from instruction on how to a newsworthy newspaper article. The second activity will be done individually; however, students may work collaboratively as they structure their stories.	
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Learning Activities		
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Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	<p><u>Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?</u> On a chart, the teacher will prepare an outline of the 5W questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? The teacher will prepare a pretend "newsworthy" situation and share it with the students (ex. a bus wreck, something being stolen, a sports victory, school productions, etc.). Using this example, students will identify the 5W's and How to be included in the story. The teacher will write the ideas on the 5W's chart.</p> <p>Next, using pre-made cards with one 5W (and how) word on each, students will identify each 5W element in a real news article. Each student will have one word. As the article is being read, students will hold up their card at the appropriate moment when the question is answered.</p> <p><u>Newsworthy Stories</u></p>	
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		<p>The teacher will lead a brief classroom discussion on what makes news stories “newsworthy.” Using the following discussion questions, students will gain a better sense of newsworthy stories: Why are some stories placed in the paper whereas others are not? What types of stories catch your attention and make you want to read them? How do you think newspaper staffs decide how to choose news stories?</p> <p>Following the class discussion, students will work individually to writing their first newsworthy newspaper article. Students should be reminded that this is their first time writing a newspaper article, and while they should try to make it sound as professional as possible, it is still just practice. Depending upon student readiness, the teacher may want to lead a whole class or small class discussion on possible topics in our classroom or school. This first article writing activity will be structured with a reporter sheet designed to guide students as they investigate the 5W’s and write their first story. As students begin answering key questions about their articles, they may work collaboratively with other students to make sure they add all the important details. The teacher will also briefly meet with each student to make sure that they are selecting newsworthy stories and writing them using the 5W strategy as a guide.</p> <p>Additional activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, the teacher can arrange a real newspaper reporter to come to the class one day to talk to students about writing newspaper articles. • Technology connection: http://www.headlinehistory.co.uk/# This website for kids includes many real, historical news stories that students can investigate.
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5Ws chart or poster • 5W’s cards (enough for each student to get one) • Enough Reporter Guides for each student • 2-3 real newspaper stories to investigate as a class • Additional information found at http://conexiones.asu.edu/fall97/lesson2.html

Reporter Guide

My story is about

The story is important because:

- It is about something that is happening now.
- It is happening here, in our classroom or school.
- It is about something unusual.
- It is about an important person.
- Other _____

Answer these questions about your story.

Who is the story about?

What happened?

When did this happen?

Where did this happen?

Name _____ Date _____

Five W's Chart

Fill in each row with details that answer the question.

What happened?
Who was there?
Why did it happen?
When did it happen?
Where did it happen?

How to Write a Newspaper Article

- ! The headline should be accurate and in the present tense.
- ! The first sentence needs to be short and dramatic. Surprise your reader! Make them curious.
- ! Be clear from the start – put the facts of the story first.
- ! Remember to use the 5 W's – who is involved; what happened; when did it happen; where and, most important, why?
- ! Be accurate - get your facts correct.
- ! Use active verbs wherever possible.
- ! Keep the article brief – don't bore your reader and don't make it too complicated to understand. Be incisive.
- ! Be fair – there are at least two sides to every story. Let the readers make up their own minds.
- ! Avoid clichés – find new ways to describe familiar people and events.
- ! Search for a special ingredient – make your story stand out from the others

Lesson Plan: Thinking About the Audience

1 to 2 Days

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2		TLW brainstorm ideas with teachers and peers. 2.2.01a TLW select a focus for writing. 2.2.01d	
Standards-Based Instructional Goals			
Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW learn to consider the audience with selecting a topic for an article as well as when writing the article itself. TLW also become aware of the variety of interests present within their classroom and outside audiences.	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	The students briefly discussed the element of audience in the previous group of lessons about writing articles. This section of the curriculum focuses more intently on the audience and gives the students and opportunity to talk directly with those who will be reading their work.	
Assessment			
Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	Students will be familiar with the term "audience." Many of them are involved in sports or other activities where they will be watched by spectators. They should be able to transfer this idea into their writing. Currently, their writing is read by themselves, the teacher, classmates, and sometimes parents. In this lesson, we will take what they know about audience and transform it into a more interactive source.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	All students will participate in the construction of a class list about audience wants and needs. They will also do a take home assignment where they will talk to another potential audience member. As a whole class or in small groups, students will discuss the implications of what they have found through their interviews.	Informal assessment
Student Grouping			
Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	This lesson will be taught whole group since it is important for all the students that take part in the classroom newspaper. The audience is crucial to an authentic writing program; therefore all students must understand that the product they are creating will be viewed by others. In the activity, students will work in cooperation with others in the class.	
Learning Activities			
Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	The lesson will begin by discussing by whom the newspaper will be viewed. By compiling a visible list, students will be able to see how extensive their audience is. Next, discuss with the students who they would like to read their paper. For example, students may choose to share their paper with other classes or grade levels. Since the students will be reading each other's articles, they are all members of the audience. For the next 5-10 minutes, the students will talk with each other about what they would like to read about in the paper. Each student will keep a record of what they learn on a piece of notebook paper. The goal will be for them to briefly talk with at least 5 of their classmates. The teacher may keep a timer and remind students of how long they have to keep them on task. Additionally, the teacher may advise students to give various answers to their	

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		<p>classmates so they are not repeating the same thing each time. The lists that they compile will be turned into the teacher where it will be made into a comprehensive class list. This list can be added to later, but it will be kept visible so students will be able to remember what the audience wants.</p> <p>For homework that night, the students will be assigned to talk to one person who will probably read our class paper and ask them the same question. These responses will be added to the already started list. The aide them in their task, they will all be given a take home sheet to complete and return the next day. Once the list is completed, the class will discuss the implications of what they have found. This can be done in small groups or as an entire class.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two large pieces of paper • homework sheets with reminders of interview instructions • notebook paper and pencils • timer

Attention-Getters

A well-designed advertisement will grab the attention of people who see or hear it. For print ads this usually means that the advertisement includes:

A. headline - This is a large, easy-to-read, simply-stated, clever statement that gets your attention. It can be a single word or only a few words. It should convey one main idea or selling point. It has one function — to get the readers' attention. It should contain active, colorful words.

B. illustration - The illustration (drawing or photograph) should support the headline and demonstrate the claim that is made.

C. subhead - Some advertisements have a subheading that is in smaller type than the headline. It elaborates on the headline or introduces other features.

D. sales talk - The advertisement also has a section of information that is usually in much smaller type than the headline. It gives the reader more information, offers proof of any claims made in the headline and persuades him or her to take action (buy the product). This should be as convincing as possible.

JUMPY **A**

JUNIOR BASKETBALL CAMP **B**

Sign up today for a fun-filled week of skill development. Learn to play like the pros. Build friendships. Free T-shirt for the first 50 registrants. Call today for information. 797-1234 **D**

Special Projects

1. Select several printed advertisements and analyze how special layout techniques are used. Look for things like placement of headlines and pictures, use of bright colors, attractive pictures, and attention-getting words. Mount the advertisements along with your analysis of why the ads are effective.
2. Draw or cut out a picture of a product. Paste it in the middle of a piece of paper. Use this as the beginning of an advertisement. Include a headline, sales talk, appeal to a human need and an offer.

The Language of Advertising

Language has an influence over people and how they act. For this reason, advertisers choose their words carefully so that they convey the correct message and are effective in motivating people to act in a certain way. The visual appeal of an advertisement catches the viewer's eye and gets his attention, but the language that is used helps people understand and remember the product.

Advertisers usually use language that is positive and emphasizes the good qualities of what they are trying to sell. They may compare their product to another one or may just use superlatives (biggest, best, whitest, fastest, most honest) to tell how great their product is.

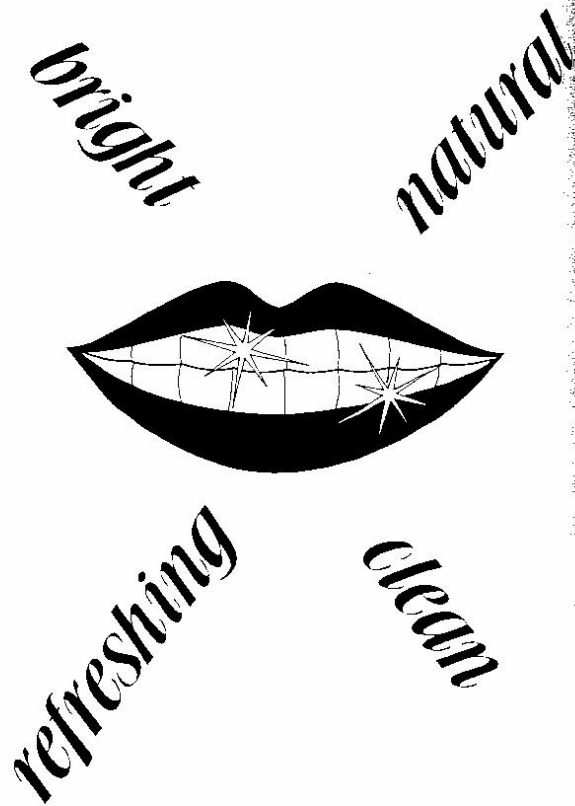
The fifteen most frequently used adjectives and verbs are:

adjectives

new
good/better/best
free
fresh
delicious
full
sure
clean
wonderful
special
crisp
fine
big
natural
real

verbs

make
get
give
have
see
buy
come
go
know
keep
look
need
love
use
feel



HOOKERS AND GRABBERS ACTIVITY

1. Divide into groups of 3 or 4 – choose a recorder
2. Hand out 1 picture (magazine ad) to each group- face down
3. Give them 30 seconds to look at it without writing anything down
4. Tell them to turn it over
5. Give 30 seconds to write down everything they remember about the ad - make sure put the number of the picture ad on the paper
6. Pass to next group and do the same thing until each group has looked at each ad
7. Write on the board the numbers of the ads
8. Assign a team to each number and have them write what they have written
9. Rotate and go to next picture and tally mark any of the same, write down any you have different
10. Discuss what it is in a print ad that we remember – what will you have to make sure you put in yours?

Lesson Plan: Writing Newspaper Book Reviews 2 to 3 Days

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2		TLW write to express opinions and judgments. 2.2.09c TLW summarize a story. 2.2.10e	
Standards-Based Instructional Goals			
Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW read book reviews to learn the qualities and characteristics of a good book review. TLW then write a book review including the three major points of a good book review. good book review (and in turn the formats for movie and music reviews)	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students have been learning about different aspects of a newspaper. This lesson fits into the classroom unit on the Caldecott medal. Students have been reading a wide variety of books and judging them on Caldecott attributes. Writing book reviews will enable students to learn a new skill for the newspaper as well as giving them a real way to show their learning about book critiques.	
Assessment			
Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	The students have a firm foundation for critiquing books based on Caldecott criteria (art technique, pictures and words working together, and kid's opinion) which they demonstrate throughout the unit by rating books. This beginning knowledge will aide them in writing about a book. The students have also already read a wide variety of 2007 Caldecott contenders. Students also have a basic knowledge of book summarizing.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Students will produce a book review containing at least the three major parts of a good book review. Exceptional book reviews will include other aspects observed from readings of real book reviews. Student book reviews will be published in the class newspaper. Since students will be producing an actual, published piece, this lesson is an authentic measure of student knowledge.	Formal assessment
Student Grouping			
Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	Students will be taught in a large group setting. All book reviews will be published in a Caldecott special edition newspaper that contains only book reviews. Students that exhibit an early knowledge of book summarizing and critiquing will be placed in a small group to support their usage of more particular book reviewing skills.	

Learning Activities		
Pre-Teaching	<p>What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.</p>	<p>Day One The teacher will begin by sharing “a book review I wish I had written.” The shared review will be of a book already read by the class but the actual title will be omitted. The teacher will read the review then ask the students to guess what book it was talking about. She will then ask how they knew it was about that book. This will lead nicely into a discussion about summarizing. If students show confusion about what it means to summarize, more time can be spent discussing it.</p> <p>The teacher will tell the students where book reviews can be found. Students will then be asked why book reviews are important. As a class, they will create a short list on the purpose of book reviews (ex. tell about books, persuade people to read a book, tell about a bad book, etc.). Next, the class will create a list about the part of a book review. The teacher may prompt “What information did the book review tell you about the book?” Students may come up with an extensive list, but only three aspects are important for their reviews: 1) A description of the book (summary) that should include who the main character is 2) The writer’s opinion of the book (taking care not to be too mean). All opinions must be supported with reasons and 3) Who the book is for (audience age). Students may decide to add additional information like a discussion of the art technique and other Caldecott criteria.</p> <p>At the end of lesson one, students will choose a book they want to review. They are encouraged to pick books they did NOT like as well as ones that they did. They will read the book at least twice. While reading, they will jot down words that describe the book. Today they are simply compiling a list about important things to know about the book. They will use this list to guide their writing. The teacher will demonstrate how to create the list before students begin.</p> <p>Day Two-Three The minilesson will begin with a brief review of the lists created the day before on the purpose of book reviews and things to include in a book review. A few students will be given the opportunity to share what they have done so far in their lists about books they are reviewing.</p> <p>The class will do a shared writing book review using the short list created the day before. They will follow the rubric (the three major things to include) as well as information on the art technique used. After the review is written, students will have the opportunity to write their own reviews. This may take one to two days. While writing reviews, students must have the book they are reviewing in front of them. While students are writing, the teacher will rotate around the room to offer advice or instruction. If necessary, a small group of students will meet with the teacher to include more descriptive details in their reviews if they have already fit the necessary requirements.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	<p>Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher will need to have copies of all the books that the students choose to review. Group ideas and the shared writing will be written on chart paper that may be revisited throughout all the lessons. The teacher will also need copies of numerous reviews available for students to reference as examples as they write. The Horn Book Magazine would be an excellent reference piece. • Routman, R. (2002). Conversations. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

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	<p>How will you adapt/modify the instructional materials to make the content relevant and accessible to your students?</p>	<p>Students that finish early will have the option of writing a second review or helping "edit" with classmates. If any of the students struggle with any of the concepts of book reviews, they will either verbally critique the book first with the teacher or they will meet in a small instructional group with the teacher.</p>
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Lesson Plan: Interviewing and Incorporating Quotations 1 to 2 weeks

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2		TLW apply elements of language. 2.2.04a TLW understand punctuation. 2.1.03d	
Standards-Based Instructional Goals			
Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW will learn how to use their peers and adults and resources for information through the format of an interview. TLW will design questions to obtain information for newspaper columns.	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students quickly learn by studying newspapers and through natural curiosity that other people are great resources for obtaining information. They also learn that opinions are an important part of making a newspaper real and interesting. As they experience authentic newspapers and work through their own ideas, they will choose to incorporate interviews with their peers and other adults. Most students ask to do this without any formal instruction. These lessons fit into the curriculum as students begin experimenting with interviews. These lessons are designed to teach students how to make their interviews (which they have started practicing) better and more professional.	
Assessment			
Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	Students have begun to conduct interviews on their own. They have experience writing their own questions and conducting interviews. Many times, their interviews are brief and have short answers. They are very good at asking questions and listing answers. Through minilessons, they will learn how to ask well-designed questions and to use quotes within their articles.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Student learning will be assessed with each minilesson. Some lessons may require practice, while others will require simple explanation and group examples. The teacher will need to observe students to see how much practice they will need.	Informal assessment
Student Grouping			
Pre-Teachi	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	Large group, small group, and individual instruction	
Learning Activities			
Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	<u>Interviewing Basics</u> Think about questions you want to ask before you conduct your interview. Keep a list of questions you want to ask. During the interview, if another questions pops into your head (especially if it relates to something that the interviewee says) then go ahead and ask it. You may either right their answers down immediately or wait until the end of the interview to write down what you remember. Using a tape recorder is something that professionals do, so students may do the same.	

		<p><u>Asking the right question</u> Most students will need pointers on asking the right questions. Many times, they will fall into the trap of asking “yes or no” questions. This means that the questions they ask tend to get a “yes,” “no,” or one word response. Have students think about ways that they could rework their questions to get longer, more detailed answers. As a class or small group, make a list of ways to start questions that may get longer answers (Ex. Tell me more about..., What did you think..., What was it like...). For practice, students can be paired up. They will write a few (depending on time and level of expertise) interview questions for their partner and then share them. The partners may make suggestions or comment on the questions. If a question needs some reworking, they may work together to fix it. Remember, the goal is to get as much information from your subject as possible!</p> <p><u>Surveys</u> Surveying is a great way to get more hesitant writers involved. To create a survey, the student will need to think of a question (preferably one related to other newspaper topics or classroom events) to ask his or her fellow students. The students will then go and ask all the students in the class for their response. Some children will opt to publish the information in a list format. However, many students enjoy putting the “researched” information into a bar graph or other visual form.</p> <p><u>Teaching Quotations</u> Teaching students how to punctuate quotations is an important (and heavily tested) skill. Writing quotations within the context of a newspaper enables students to learn how to use quotes authentically. Begin by showing students the main components of writing quotes: opening and closing quotation marks, capitalization, commas/periods, etc. After this brief instructional minilesson, give students the chance to identify newspaper authors’ usage of quotations within a real newspaper. Give the students a highlighter and a newspaper passage with embedded quotes. Tell students that their own stories can be enhanced by adding quotations within their writing. This way, they are combining two formats: the traditional newspaper article and interviews. Now, using highlighters, students will go through the article and highlight places where quotations are used. Of course, the best way to learn is through actual practice. For upcoming articles, the teacher can challenge students to incorporate at least one quotation into their articles.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several copies of a local newspaper • optional tape recorder • class list- for surveys • paper on clipboards • highlighters • pencils • chart paper to create graphs (the teacher may replicate in word processor for the finished piece or the student made graph may be copied into the final newspaper) • Routman, R. (2000). Conversations. Portsmouth: Heinemann. Pg. 387-389

Lesson Plan: Writing Photo Captions One Lesson

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	TLW incorporate photographs or illustrations in written works. 2.2.06b
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals

Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW understand the need for caption writing with photographs and illustrations in newspapers and will write a sample caption for a class photo that includes the three major characteristics of a caption.
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students have already learned the importance of photos and illustrations in newspaper publication. They are now ready to

Assessment

Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	Photography is something that all students like to include in their newspaper activities. When given the opportunity they are all enthusiastic about taking photos of their article topics. Since they include so many photos and drawings in their final newspaper product, a minilesson on this topic became necessary. Students know that their photos are connected to their topics and are now ready to take the next step into learning about captions.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Each student will practice by writing a caption for a photo taken at some class event. Different photos are passed out to the students. Each student will write a caption for the picture they are given. The caption should include the following three qualities: 1. Explain what the illustration shows (Be specific!) 2. Name the people and 3. Tell why this is important to your topic. Captions should be no more than two sentences. Students who include photos in their newspaper stories must write captions for their photographs.	Informal assessment

Student Grouping

Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	This minilesson will be a whole class activity. As an entire group, students will be able to discuss the importance of captions and be able to hear each other's responses.
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Learning Activities

Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	<p>1. Experience first- look at real newspapers or yearbooks to look at captions. Ask students what they noticed. Show a book that has many captions. Cover up the photo and show how confusing it may be without a caption. Additionally captions make it so that readers can easily identify what the topic is without searching the entire text.</p> <p>2. Why are captions important? List student opinions and guide them to discover the three main characteristics: explains what the illustration shows, names the people/places and tells why the picture is important. The major three should be included in all the captions that we will write in our newspapers.</p>
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		Students write a caption for a class photograph that they are given. They will have the option to share their caption and photo.
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photos• Several current newspaper copies• Yearbooks• Kid appropriate magazines• White post-it tape• Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2001). Nonfiction craft lessons: Teaching information writing K-8. Portland: Stenhouse Publishers.

Lesson Plan: Creating Article Titles One Lesson

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2		TLW sharpen the selected focus for writing. 2.2.03f TLW revise to clarify and refine writing. 2.2.03f	
Standards-Based Instructional Goals			
Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	Students should learn the importance of a creative, attention grabbing title. When writing a newspaper, good titles are imperative. This skill will transfer into other content areas as they generate informational pieces or fictitious stories.	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students will have experience writing stories and adding their own titles. This lesson is designed to take students additional techniques to make their article titles more professional and effective at grabbing reader attention.	
Assessment			
Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	Students have been writing "labeling" titles to accompany their newspaper stories. They have also had created titles for their stories in writer's workshop.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Student interaction during the lesson will be noted. Students will be asked to carry the suggestions from the lesson into their own writing. Since all students will be using titles at one point or another, the teacher will be able to note their understanding on the importance of a good title.	Informal assessment
Student Grouping			
Pre-Teach	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	This activity will be done with the entire class since all students will be adding titles to their work. Some students may require individual instruction if they are unable to create a title using one of the three strategies for creating a jazzed up title.	
Learning Activities			
Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	To begin, the teacher will stand at a slight distance from the students while holding up a newspaper. The teacher will then ask, what catches your eye the most on this page. Answers may vary, but the class should reach the consensus that the newspaper titles are one of the first things seen in the paper. Also notice that newspaper titles are simply labeled as "basketball game" or "recess." Rather, the titles are "jazzed up." They are designed to make the reader want to know more. Flecher and Portolupi (2001) suggest using three ideas for jazzing up titles: (1) surprise the readers- "Rabbits That Kill", (2) Use humor- It's Disgusting and We Ate It! and (3) try using an adjective that starts with the same letter as your subject (alliteration)- "The Terrifying Tarantula." Time permitting, the teacher point out specific titles and ask the students which technique the writer is using to get attention. For an additional activity, the teacher may read a short article from the paper (without naming the title) then take student suggestions for an attention-grabbing title that fits the words. Show the students the real title and see if they agree that it is the best or if one of their suggestions	

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		<p>is better. Many times effective titles will affect the entire story by making it more creative. A good title is a great start! It is like the handshake that hooks and draws the reader in.</p>
Materials and Resources		
	<p>Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A daily newspaper• Optional chart paper to write student responses and/or the three principles for good titles• Fletcher, J., and Portalupi, R. (2001). Nonfiction craft lessons. Portland: Stenhouse Publishers. pg. 53

Lesson Plan: Finding a Topic 1 Day

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	TLW select a focus for writing. 2.2.01d TLW use a variety of sources to gather information. 2.2.01d
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals		
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Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW will use observational information to generate current and interesting topics for a newspaper article	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students have previously been responsible for finding subjects and topics for other narrative stories in writing workshop.	

Assessment			
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Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	As a group, we have created lists of ideas for newspaper articles, and students have individually written newspaper stories based on their own ideas. This lesson is designed to give them more strategies for selecting current, interesting topics to write about.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Students will turn in their research guide sheets. The sheets will not be graded, but rather simply on their observational list. Students that did not create a well-rounded list may need more help in another minilesson on topic generation.	Informal assessment

Student Grouping		
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Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	This will be a whole class activity. As we are touring the school, students will be working on their own to compile a list of current topics, however, they will share their list with classmates at the end of the lesson.	
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Learning Activities		
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Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	<p>School Tour Activity Since the class newspaper is designed to inform our audience (parents and other students) about the important things in our classroom, our topics will center on what is going on in our room and school. Sometimes thinking of a topic will be easy and other time it will be more difficult. An important skill that students need to learn is how to research. Research is a very complicated process; however, our students will learn some key parts of research: observation and gathering information. So, in this form of research students will simply use their sense to figure out what to write about. They will use a clipboard and research guide sheet to tour the school. They will write down ideas from what they observe using their sense. What do they see? What do they hear? The teacher will guide them into using signs around the building to gather information about current or upcoming events at the school. As they work at compiling a list of topics the following four points can be helpfully considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is happening this week? 2. What do I know a lot about? 3. What would my audience want to read about? 4. Is the topic current and important? <p>Encourage the students to share with each other what they do to think of a topic. The four helper questions (and any other helper hints created by</p>	
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		<p>students) can be placed on display on a poster in the classroom to be a constant reminder.</p> <p>As the class is touring the school, students will compile their list individually. However, when the class comes back to the classroom, we will share what was written down. Hopefully, the class list of topics will be quite extensive, thus illustrating that there is a plethora of topic ideas just waiting to be discovered.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clipboard • Pencil • Research guide handouts • Poster board (optional)

Classroom and School Research



What is happening this week?



What do I know a lot about? What would my audience want to read about? Is the topic current and important?

Lesson Plan: Creating Newspaper Advertisements 1 to 2 Days

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	TLW write for a variety of purposes (e.g., advertisements) 2.2.11afe TLW use adjectives appropriately (e.g., descriptive, persuasive). 2.3.01d TLW brainstorm ideas with teachers and peers. 2.2.01a
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals

Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW access, evaluate, and organize information from print. TLW create a four-part advertisement including a headline, illustration, subhead, and sales talk. Students learn to use persuasive language in their advertisements.
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students have already been creating their own advertisements for the newspaper based on their own prior knowledge. The purpose of this lesson is to teach them how to create profession-looking advertisements as modeled by real ads found in newspapers and magazines. This activity aligns with what they are doing and learning in other subject areas (ex. the Business unit).

Assessment

Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	Since the students have been creating advertisements for previous editions of the newspaper, I analyzed what they seemed to be doing and what they were not doing. I will also ask them where they got their knowledge of how to write advertisements. It is highly probable (by observing their previous work) that they have learned a little about advertising from the popular website Webkinz.com as well as commercial advertisements on television.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	All students will submit an advertisement that should include the four parts of an advertisements as well as persuasive language.	Informal assessment

Student Grouping

Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	As a whole class, students will discuss the parts of a successful advertisement. Students are put into small groups for the optional Hookers and Grabbers activity. Students will create their own advertisements individually.
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Learning Activities

Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	Instruction will begin with a whole group brainstorming session about the collective student knowledge of advertisements. The teacher will present 2 or three examples of simple advertisements that illustrate the four main parts of an attention-grabbing advertisement: a headline, an illustration, a subhead, and sales talk (persuasive language). If students need extra information on sales talk, the class may list examples of frequently used adjectives and verbs (list included in this lesson). From here, the teacher may decide for students to begin their own advertisements or he or she may opt for more practice. The attached Hookers and Grabbers activity may be used to help students consider the important aspects of an advertisement and the lasting impressions that they leave with the
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		audience.
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper for brainstormed ideas • 7-10 quality advertisements from a newspaper or magazine • Art materials (markers, colored pencils, white paper, etc.) • White board, dry erase markers, and a timer (Hookers and Grabbers activity) • Some activities modified from Metro Nashville Public Schools' ENCORE Unit on Advertising

Lesson Plan: Letters in the Newspaper Advice Columns and Letters to the Editor 3 Days

Content Standards for Learners: Grade 2	TLW write for a variety of purposes (e.g., letters) 2.2.11afe
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Standards-Based Instructional Goals		
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Pre-Teaching	What do you want students to learn?	TLW apply their knowledge of letter writing to other forms of writing by writing advice column letters and letters to the editor. TLW discuss the power of words within letter writing.	
	How does this content build on what your students have already learned?	Students have already learned about letter writing within a previous unit.	

Assessment		
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Pre-Teaching	How you have assessed your students' prior knowledge? What have you learned about your students' current understanding in relation to the instructional goals?	All students have successfully written letters to each other and their grandparents within a letter writing unit. Some students have previously expressed interest in doing an advice column in the newspaper.	
	What evidence will you use to assess learning? How does it align with your instructional goals?	Since not all of the students will be writing advice column responses, their understanding of Did they identify a problem and did they use a letter-writing format,	Informal assessment

Student Grouping		
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Pre-Teaching	How will you group students? How does this grouping support your instructional goals?	Whole group for a lesson on writing letters to an advice column. Individual or small group discussion for advice column responders (based upon student interest).	
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Learning Activities		
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Pre-Teaching	What instructional strategies will you use? How do they support your goals? Describe the procedures, include key questions, etc.	<p>Day One Students will learn about advice columns. They will learn about one of the most famous: Dear Abby. On an overhead projector, the teacher will display several of Dear Abby's columns. As a group, we will then list characteristics of the advice columns. Next, we will read a few more easier to understand and relate to columns from American Girl magazine (or other available children's version). After reading the additional columns, we will add a little more to the list. Students should conclude that advice columns look a lot like letters. They are also requests for help. The writer tells a little bit about their problems and then signs it anonymously or with a name that relates to their problem. Students should also note the responses from the person giving advice. They will learn that it is a big responsibility to give advice to others, so they should learn all the facts about the problem and give ethical advice.</p> <p>Day Two Students will practice writing their own letters to an advice column. Rather than presenting their own problems, they will write from the perspective of a story character. Students will be placed in pairs. In their groups, they will be given</p>	
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		<p>two minutes (or more depending on the students) to write a letter asking for advice. Their letters can be playful or serious. In this exercise, they will write pretending to be a story character. If a student has trouble thinking in this perspective, encourage them to think about a fairytale character since most students are very familiar with those stories. Next, after writing their letter, they will switch with their partner. They will be given a minute to read the letter. The teacher will then instruct them to write a response. They will have three to five minutes to do so. This entire activity will be timed just for efficiencies sake. Students should not feel pressured. If anything, this should be a fun, quick activity. If there is additional time, students can go through a second round of practice.</p> <p>In our class, one student was chosen anonymously to be our Dear Joe. He chose the name on his own and kept up with the advice column. We had an advice column box in the room where students could submit their questions. "Dear Joe" would read the questions and then chose the ones he wanted to answer. The students loved reading the weekly responses. It became a fun game for the students to guess "Dear Joe's" identity.</p> <p>Letters to the Editor</p> <p>Letters to the editor is additional format that will use what students have learned about letter writing. The teacher will choose a couple of examples from a local newspaper to share. Sometimes local high school newspapers will run letters to the editor and student enjoy reading these examples. Basically, they will need to know that it is a way to voice their opinion on a previously written article. It can be a way to offer praise for an article or anger over a recent issue. Students need to know that this is not a way to insult other classmates or their newspaper articles. Depending upon student grade level, a discussion on the first amendment and the freedom of speech including the freedom of the press.</p>
Materials and Resources		
Pre-Teaching	Describe the instructional materials and resources you will use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparencies of Dear Abby and American Girl advice columns • Paper and pencils • Advice column box (mailbox or a shoebox) • Several copies of letters to the editor

Case Study- Tyler Assessment Focus

Tyler started the year as a hesitant reader and writer. He is an extremely likable child who loves to make his classmates laugh. All of the other students enjoy being around him. In fact, sitting at his lunch table is often a cause for excitement. Tyler enjoys and excels in sports. He also has a tremendous sense of humor. Many times, his sense of humor is beyond his age. He has the ability to make both students and teachers laugh with his jokes and multiple voice accents.

Early in the year, Tyler struggled with reading and writing. He did not enjoy reading and was very hesitant to write. In reading workshop, Tyler was found to be a struggling reader. In writer's workshop he often chose to draw comics rather than write stories. Throughout the year, there has been a shift in Tyler. Now in writer's workshop Tyler is eager to share his story ideas. He has also learned how to include his sense of humor into his writing. He has benefited from the constant reminder that his writing should be just like he is talking.

Tyler has been an exciting child to observe through the class newspaper. In the beginning he did not know where to start. Through encouragement and individual instruction, Tyler has discovered formats that match his interest. Notably, Tyler has adopted his signature column Ask Joe. His identity as the advice column writer has been kept a secret from all the children, which has resulted in a weekly guessing game. When the students submit advice questions, Tyler is secretly pulled from the classroom to respond. His responses have grown from simple one liners to more detailed, humorous answers.

Tyler has also experimented with other writing styles such as interviews and sports reports. He particularly likes writing the student profile section (ex. Meet Drew). It has been absolutely thrilling to watch Tyler turn into a more confident writer and reader. I am convinced that given the amount of individual support he received along with “finding his voice” has made Tyler into the writer (and even reader) that he has become. In fact, Tyler was recently assessed in reading where it was determined that he is now reading on grade level. His newspaper stories reflect this remarkable growth. When I asked Tyler about his newspaper experience, he responded, “It’s fun. I get to answer questions for people and work on stuff that people get to read. I get to practice writing by saying stuff that I want to say.”

Additionally, Tyler’s mother had some glowing remarks to make about the classroom newspaper. When asked on her opinion of the paper she responded, “It is fabulous, absolutely fabulous! It is so creative. It’s great. It allows you to see where their mind is and what’s important to them. He [Tyler] is so excited about it, especially Ask Joe. He immediately pulls it out when he comes home. It takes everything in his power to not spill everything out of his notebook...It makes him want to write. It makes it personal and takes away the fear of creativity because it is creative...[my favorite parts are] Ask Joe (because I’m partial) and the interviews because it’s their chance to talk to someone. It is really like two steps. They have to talk to someone then write. I think it takes a lot of courage for them to interview adults.” When asked if there is anything she would suggest or change, she responded, “It’s great as it is!”

Format Guide

Each with the newspaper story topics will change, however, the formats stay consistent. The students will observe multiple formats as they study real newspapers and magazines. It is helpful to have these formats handy for them as they plan their weekly contributions. The following guide may be a helpful way for students as they figure out which format will work best with the topics and subjects they are exploring.