Final MA Portfolio

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FINAL MA PORTFOLIO

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in English Teaching

24 April 2018

Dr. Dawn Hubbell-Staeble First Reader
Dr. Bill Albertini, Second Reader
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Analytical Narrative

When I tell my family and friends that I am working on my MA, many of them assume that I am doing so to get a pay raise. And while this is definitely a nice incentive, it is not the reason I went back to school. My students are.

With the start of College Credit Plus in Ohio, I had the opportunity to teach GSW 1110 and 1120 through BGSU to my students. This would mean that my students would graduate high school with 6 college credits and have completed a course that is mandatory in all Ohio state colleges. What an opportunity for them! But this would mean that I had to go back to school. Did I want to do this?

I work in a small school, and I am the only English teacher for grades 10, 11 and 12. I have six different courses I teach each day. This is a lot of work. I was not sure if I could do my job well and take my own classes. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I would be doing my students a disservice by not going back. If my students could take GSW with me, they would be at an advantage. Not only do I already know their strengths and weaknesses in their writing (as I have had them for two years by the time they are seniors), they know me and are comfortable with me. This means that I can design the course around their strengths and weaknesses, and they are more likely to come to me with questions and for additional help. I decided I needed to get my MA in English.

Unexpectedly, there were other perks of going back to school while I was teaching. The concepts I learned and the materials I read had more meaning behind them. I could visualize how I could use the concepts in my classes, and I could make connections between the texts I was reading for classes and the texts I taught. For example, when taking a linguistics course early in my graduate career, a class that I honestly thought would be a waste of my time, I was pleasantly
surprised with how the information popped up in conversations I had with my students. When a student expressed frustration with the difficulties of spelling, I was able to give her an explanation for all the inconsistencies in sounds and spellings because I had read Spell It Out by David Crystal for my linguistics class. While this did not help the student become a better speller, it did help her realize that her issues with spelling was more than the fact that she was bad at spelling.

Most of my other classes I took for my MA had more application in my classroom than the linguistics course I took. From these classes, I picked four projects that I worked on to revise for this portfolio. These projects, both in my original drafting of them and in my revisions of them, helped me to solidify my thoughts and to apply what I was learning into a meaningful context.

The first project I chose to revise is titled “Lessons for Effective Reflecting” from the course ENG 6800: Reflective Writing: From the Personal to the Transformative taught by Dr. Hoy. I was pleasantly surprised by what I learned in this course. I had always seen value in reflecting, but it was not something that I personally did a lot, and it was not something I remembered to add into my curriculum. Often, reflection was something I had students do if I needed to fill in 5-10 minutes or when I had a substitute. This course helped me realize how I could effectively make reflection a part of my curriculum, not just an afterthought. The five lessons I created for this project are for GSW 1110. The lessons span the semester course, allowing reflection to be a central part of the course. I did implement a few of these reflection lessons, and I was pleasantly surprised by the results. After talking with students, they felt like reflecting made them pay more attention to the feedback they received from me and made them more aware of what they needed to do to improve their writing.
Unfortunately, when revising project one, I had to do so without instructor comments. I had not realized that I needed these when I took the course since I was enrolled through the Falcon Grant. I emailed my instructor but was not able to get her comments. So my revisions are based on discussions with my first reader. Most of my big revisions happened within the lessons themselves. I clarified my points, rearranged the order of activities within a lesson, added an appendix, created more assignment sheets, rubrics, and presentations, and I updated the learning outcomes for GSW 1110. I also took out a part of the paper called Assessment Plan. Instead of this section, I concluded each lesson with a brief description of the formative and summative assessments used and the learning outcomes that each assessment was used for. I chose to do this because, as an instructor, having everything in one place makes more sense. I want to be able to look at my lesson plans and see everything that I need and everything that I need to know. My revisions allowed me to create a more cohesive and usable unit that aligned with the current GSW learning outcomes.

The lesson plans for the unit are written in second person. My original draft had a little bit of every tense in it: mostly second with some occasional third and first person thrown in. I decided on second person after looking at several different lesson plans over the play *Othello*. Of the four units I found, three of them were written in the second person. The first unit was from *The Folger Shakespeare Library’s Education Department Curriculum Guide to Othello*. In the guide, Jenny Beekly’s lesson “Fear and Loathing in Othello (A Lesson in Character Analysis)” was featured. The instructions in Beekly’s lesson plans are written so that a teacher can easily read it and know exactly what to do: “Before the next class period, you will need to photocopy each group’s work on quotations from *Othello*. Collate and make a packet to give to each student at the beginning of class. Arrange all the chairs in a large circle to encourage class discussion”
By using second person, directions can be streamlined with the use of imperative sentences that do not need explicit subjects. This allows for the teacher to better skim the lesson quickly before class or even during class to know what to do next. The other two units I found for *Othello* that were written in the second person was *A Teacher’s Guide to the Signet Classic Edition of William Shakespeare’s Othello* written by Debra James and Teacher’s Pet Publications Inc.’s “*Othello A Unit Plan*” written by Mary B. Collins. Both of these units frequently use imperative sentences to instruct the teacher on what to do in the lesson. And when needed, “you” rather than “the teacher” is used as the subject of the sentence. I choose this same format because lesson plans are meant to be utilized and the second-person tense allows instructors to better envision how the lesson would work in his/her own classroom.

My second project was completed for ENG 6090: The Teaching of Literature, which I am taking concurrently with my Master’s Portfolio course. The title of this project is “Literature: A Subject Still Worth Discussing.” For this paper, I needed to answer this question: “Why do we read literature?” I struggled with this paper when I wrote it for the course. I had ideas for what I wanted to write, but I could not get those ideas out of my head and onto the paper. I believe this was because of the restrictions of the assignment: I had to incorporate three of the readings we had done for the course. Unfortunately, the reasons I had for why I believed literature should be read was not in the readings we did for the course: at least not fully. However, revising allowed me to expand on my ideas and look at them with a fresh mind. In addition to this, I had done more readings in the course. After talking with my instructor, Dr. Coates, and working with my first reader, Dr. Hubbell-Staeble, I was able to transform this paper into something completely new. My original thesis was “We read and discuss literature because literature allows us to find ourselves and to better understand the world around us.” However, after discussing with Dr.
Coates about how I needed to address the ideas I pose in my introduction more throughout the essay (the ideas that literature is no longer valued while marketable skills are), I changed my thesis to “Literature needs to continued be read and discussed in the 21st century because it allows us to find ourselves and to better understand the world around us, and if we are able to do this, we can be better functioning members of the fast-past, skill-oriented world we live in.” The addition of the second statement to my thesis was the driving force for the changes in my revision. I threw out a few paragraphs and added in a few new ones. No longer having the restrictions from the course, I was able to include new sources that better fit my ideas, and I was able to bring in some of the newer material I had read in the course.

My third project, “Peer Review in the High School Writing Classroom: Benefits, Preparations, and Strategies” is one that holds a lot of interest for me. When I went to BGSU as an undergraduate, I worked at the Learning Commons for three years as a writing consultant. My time at the Learning Commons drastically shaped the way I approach teaching writing. My approach focuses on conferencing with my students and on peer review. However, I found it difficult to effectively orchestrate peer review with my students. I knew what it looked like, I knew how to do it, but I did not know how to teach it to my students. This project allowed me to find ways to make peer review meaningful for my students.

My peer review project originally started as a website in ENG 6200: Teaching Writing taught by Dr. Lee Nickoson. The website, titled A Teacher’s Resource: Peer Review, was designed to be a usable resource for teachers. While papers are a useful tool for disseminating information, most teachers I know are overwhelmed with planning, grading, and other extracurricular activities. Looking over bullet-points on a website is much more appealing than reading a 15-page paper. However, for ENG 6040: Graduate Writing taught by Dr. Hoy, I had to
revise a previous project or paper. I picked to transform the peer-review website into a paper. By doing this, I was actually able to put more of my own insights in with the source material. However, Dr. Hoy’s final comments on my original draft suggested that I needed to do more of this. This was my focus during revisions. I added in a clearer thesis statement. I included more examples, more explanations, and more transitions.

My fourth project, “Understanding the Meaning, not just Finding the Error: Four Weeks of Grammar in the Context of Writing Mini-lessons” was completed in ENG 6220: Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing taught by Dr. Wood. This was the most impactful course I took during my MA. Teaching grammar has always been something I struggled with, mostly because my ideas about how grammar should be taught did not work well with most of the resources I was finding. I did not like worksheets that asked students to find the error or to locate the noun. I wanted something more, but I struggled to find what I was looking for. This class was exactly what I have been looking for: teaching grammar in conjunction with writing. This class was so impactful to me that after a weekend of reading several chapters for the course, I drastically changed directions in a writing unit I was teaching my American Lit. class. I came in on Monday and said “Forget what I said on Friday, we’re doing this instead.” I changed my rubric for the assignment and my lesson plans for the rest of the unit.

Unfortunately, I was not given feedback by my instructor for this assignment. My decisions on revision where based on discussions with Dr. Hubbell-Staeble. First, I made my rationale more formal. I had links and charts in it. I removed these and replaced them with paragraphs and added in a few sources. In addition to this, I revised my actual lesson plans. I changed the tense to a consistent second person to match my “Lessons on Effective Reflection” project. In addition to this, I added in standards for each week rather than listing all the standards
at the end of my lessons. I also added in an appendix so that readers would know where to find my handouts.

Revising these four projects allowed me to revisit many of the ideas I learned while earning my MA and helped me improve my own teaching strategies. While revising my reflection project, I was inspired to include more reflection in my Language Arts 12 class as they read the novel *The Things They Carried*. My peer review project reminded me that while I need to guide students through the peer review process, I need to also let them have ownership of the process. I revised my peer review guides for my sophomores so that students were making the big decisions about what was discussed about peer review. My literature project allowed me to remember why I teach literature and why I want my students to value literature as much as I do. It also reminded me that I need to get back in the habit of reading for fun. With taking graduate courses on top of all the classes I take, I often let my own personal reading fade away. Revising this paper encouraged me to pick up a book and start reading again. Going back to school to obtain my MA has benefitted both my students and me. The classes I took helped me to become a better teacher and they helped remind me why I chose to teach language arts.
Works Cited


Lessons for Effective Reflecting

I remember as an undergrad going through my methods block at BGSU that my instructors always proclaimed how vital reflection was in the classroom: I should be having my students doing it and I should be doing it. However, we were not taught how to reflect or really how to incorporate reflection in our classroom. The most that was relayed to us was that we should keep a notebook in our desk and take 10 minutes to reflect at the end of the day. Unfortunately, this information never materialized into practice. As I learned in this course, it is not enough to just reflect on your day; some analysis should be included, a plan should be made. I also learned that effective reflection needs to be taught to my students, and that is one of the aims of this unit. This reflective teaching unit is designed to go with GSW 1110. The unit relies heavily on John Dewey’s theories on reflective practices. According to Carol Rodgers, in her article “Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking,” Dewey has four criteria for reflection. Throughout this essay, I will explain how each criterion can be seen in my teaching unit.

Dewey’s first criterion can be seen in lessons one and five of my reflective writing unit. According to Rodgers, Dewey’s first criterion is about meaning-making:

Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and
ensures the progress of the individual, and ultimately, society. It is a means to essentially moral ends. (Rodgers 845)

In lesson one, I ask students to recall their knowledge on the characteristics of academic writing. This lesson should take place in the first week or two of the semester. Then, in the last week or two of the semester, students will look at the information they compiled from the beginning of the semester and add (or delete) information to the list to help them see what they have learned about academic writing. In doing so, they are connecting their learning experiences through this collective group reflection activity. They are asking themselves, “What did I know about academic writing before this class and what I have learned in this class?”

Another way Dewey’s first criterion can be seen in my unit is in lesson five. In this lesson, students are looking at their work throughout the semester and answering this question: What have I improved on as writer and what can I still improve upon as a writer? By answering this question, students are looking back at their past experiences and making a comparison to their current experience with writing. They are then looking to future experiences of writing to decide what areas they need to still work on and pay attention to in future writing assignments.

Dewey’s second criterion can be seen in lessons two and four. Dewey’s second criterion is “Reflection is a systematic rigorous disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry” (Rodgers 845). In lesson two, students are asked, after writing essay one, to reflect on their current writing process and to suggest an improvement they can make on it. To do so adequately, they should have a clear reason for wanting to make this change to their writing process. After essay two, students are then asked to go back and comment on three questions: one, did they follow the suggested change; two, was the suggested change helpful; and three, what else can they do to create a better writing process for themselves. In this lesson, by
analyzing and evaluating their actions in order to make improvements to their writing process, students are actively engaged in scientific inquiry. Dewey’s second criterion can also be seen in lesson four. Here, students are asked to create a research question based on areas they perceive to be weaknesses in their writing. They then conduct research with the goal of better understanding this area of writing. With this activity, students are deeply rooted in scientific inquiry by developing a research question and finding credible sources to help them answer their question.

Dewey’s third criterion can be seen in lessons one and three. His third criterion is “reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others” (Rodgers 845). This criterion is seen in lesson one when students individually reflect on the questions about academic writing and then a class discussion is held on the topic. Together as a class, we discuss what they wrote in their individual reflection sessions, and we compile a list of what the class collectively knows about academic writing. Reflection in community can also be seen in lesson three. In this lesson, students participate in a group peer review over a paragraph. Before the peer review activity, students are to prepare a reflection over this paragraph explaining what they feel are the paragraph’s strengths and weaknesses. During peer review, students share both their paragraphs and their reflections with one another. The discussion about a student writer’s paragraph should focus around the writer’s reflection about the paragraph: do the reviewers agree with the strengths and weaknesses the writer pointed out? This community reflection, as Rodgers explains, allows the students to confirm their values, see things from a different perspective, and add meaning to what they already know (857). Students can get agreement from their peers that this is indeed a strength in their writing. Their peers can sometimes explain a concept in a way different from the teacher that allows for better understanding. Both lessons one and three have
students sharing their reflections in a community and discussing their own reflections with their peers.

Dewey’s fourth criterion can be seen in lessons one and two. Dewey’s fourth criterion is “reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others” (Rodgers 845). In lessons one and two, students are asked to reflect on their writing. Their reflection is based on a rubric adapted from Isabelle Boutet, et al (explained in more detail later in this paper). This rubric asks students to not only describe their feelings but to also analyze what their feelings mean. When students do this, they are able to learn from their feelings, which allows them to grow both emotionally and intellectually. An example of this could be a student expressing that she is frustrated by her counterargument. The rubric asks the student to analyze that frustration by having her ask herself, “What made me frustrated with my counterargument?” The student could have several reasons for this: perhaps she felt it was a weak counterargument in the first place or perhaps she felt like she did not know how to refute the counterargument. The reflection rubric then asks her to make a plan of improvement. The student’s plan of improvement could be to seek help from either the instructor or a writing consultant about her next counterargument or to do more research for the counterargument in the next paper. In this way, the student is able to understand her frustration over her counterargument (emotional growth) and she is able to grow intellectually by detailing a plan to improve her counterargument for the next paper.

In addition to Dewey’s ideas, I drew from many other authors to help create my rubrics. Isabelle Boutet, et al., in their article “Evaluating the Implementation of Effectiveness of Reflection Writing,” explained that “students are more likely to provide superficial reflections aimed at pleasing the professor if they know that they will be graded...by not grading journals,
instructors are more likely to encourage free thought...responsibility...and insight.” However, as Ann N. Amicucci notes in her article “Using Reflection to Promote Students’ Writing Process Awareness” her students were more likely to complete an assignment if it was given even a small completion grade of two points (49). In addition to this, Kristie R. Dukewich and Deborah P. Vossen, authors of “Toward Accuracy, Depth, and Insight: How Reflective Writing Assignments can be used to Address Multiple Learning Objectives in Small and Large Courses” bring up another element of assessing reflective writing: “feedback that informs learners about the specific results of their effort is critical for skill acquisition” (100). Based on Amicucci’s, Boutet, et al, and Dukewich and Voseen’s ideas, I developed a rubric for general reflective writing in my classroom. This rubric has four criteria on it: “(a) description of feelings, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses; (b) analysis of the impact of these descriptions on learning; (c) integrating the analysis to the learning environment (e.g. new understanding or actions towards transformation); and (d) outcome of the reflection and future behaviors” (Boutet, et al.). I put three columns next to these criteria that say “Not included,” “Included,” and “Comments.” This rubric allows me to give feedback to students on their reflective writing practices that does not put a value on their ideas in their reflective writing. My feedback will be to let them know if they forgot any crucial elements of the rubric, if they need to be more detailed, or if they are doing what they need to be doing. I plan on giving students completion points for reflections done in my class with the possibility of the reflections being graded by the end of the course if students need more incentive to take the reflection assignments seriously.
Five Reflective Lessons

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<th><strong>GSW Course Learning Outcomes</strong></th>
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<td><strong>GSW 1:</strong> Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge through writing in a variety of academic genres and to a variety of academic audiences.</td>
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<td><strong>GSW 2:</strong> Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through approaching academic writing assignments as a series of cognitive tasks, including engaging in multiple modes of inquiry, synthesizing multiple points of view, critiquing student and professional writing, and assessing source materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GSW 3:</strong> Practice the processes entailed in academic writing, including recursive processes for drafting texts, collaborative activities, the development of personalized strategies, and strategies for identifying and locating source materials.</td>
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<td><strong>GSW 4:</strong> Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of academic writing, including format and documentation systems, coherence devices, conventional syntax, and control over surface features such as grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.</td>
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<td><strong>GSW 5:</strong> Engage in the electronic research and composing processes, including locating, evaluating, disseminating, using and acknowledging research, both textual and visual, from popular and scholarly electronic databases.</td>
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<td><strong>GSW 6:</strong> Demonstrate the importance of values systems in academic writing, including the abilities to write effectively to audiences with opposing viewpoints, to participate in an active learning community that values academic honesty, and to recognize the place of writing within learning processes.</td>
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**Lesson 1: Reflecting on Academic Writing**

**Overview/Purpose:**

- This lesson is designed to get students thinking about academic writing and how it is different from writing a piece of literature. Since this lesson is to be given within the first week of the class, it also asks students to make connections with their previous experiences with writing: what do they remember being their strengths and weaknesses?
- This lesson should be repeated at least 2 more times throughout the course: once in the middle of the course and again at the end.
- The questions in this lesson align with learning outcomes (LO) 4 and 6.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- Students will reflect on their knowledge of academic writing
- Students will reflect on their own writing skills.

**Materials Needed:**

- Computers for each student and teacher
Activities:

- Instruct students to either get out a paper or open a document for notes. On the projector have this prompt up (slide 3 on Academic and Reflective Writing Slides):
  - What is academic writing?
- Allow students a minute or two to write on this prompt and then show this prompt (slide 4):
  - What makes good academic writing? Or What are the components of academic writing?
- Allow students a few minutes to brainstorm a list in response to the prompt.
- Hold a discussion over the two prompts. During the discussion, record what students are saying in a Word or Google document that is projected.
- Transition students to reflective writing (slide 5), making sure to mention that both types of writing will be used in this course throughout the semester. Show students this prompt for discussion (slide 6):
  - How does reflective writing compare to academic writing?
- Invite students to make direct comparisons between reflective writing and the list created during the discussion over academic writing.
- Next, show students this discussion prompt (slide 7):
  - What are your past experiences with reflective writing?
- Respond to any concerns about reflective writing. Explain that reflective writing will be used in this class to help students become stronger, academic writers.
- Transition into expectations for reflective writing (Slide 8) and pass out the Rubric For Reflective Writing (Appendix B)
  - Strong reflective writing includes…
    - description of feelings, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses
    - analysis of the impact of these descriptions on learning
    - integrating the analysis to the learning environment (e.g. new understanding or actions towards transformation)
    - outcome of the reflection of future behaviors.
- Explain each expectation to students and then instruct students to find the assignment “Reflecting on Academic Writing” on Canvas. The prompt for this assignment is:
  - Describe your overall experience with writing in general and then specifically with academic writing. What do you like about it? What don’t you like about it? What are your strengths and weaknesses? How are you hoping to improve your writing in this course? (300 words or more)
- If time in class, students may start working on this prompt. This is due for the next class meeting.

Homework:

- Complete “Reflecting on Academic Writing” assignment on Canvas.
Assessments:

- Formative Assessment: Class discussions over academic and reflective writing (LO 4 and 6)
- Summative Assessment: The Reflecting on Academic Writing assignment will be assessed with the Rubric for Reflective Writing (LO 6)
  - This could also be a formative assessment if the reflection is given a completion grade and the rubric is used to merely give students helpful feedback on improving reflections and not to give the reflection a grade.

Lesson 2: Reflecting on the Writing Process

Overview/Purpose:

- This lesson is designed to get students thinking about their own writing process to better help them gauge what works and does not work in their current process.
- This lesson will span 2 classes. The first lesson should take place after students have completed their first essay. The second lesson should take place after students complete essay 2.
- This lesson aligns with GSW 1110’s LO 3.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze their own writing process and outline a plan for strengthening their process
- Students will reflect on the following items: did they followed their plan for improvement, was the change effective, and how else can they improve their writing process.

Materials needed

- Computers for each student

Activities for Day 1:

- As a class, have a brief discussion over the essay students just turned in (should be the first essay they have completed for the course). What did they like about it? What did they find difficult about it? Turn discussion into the direction of writing processes. Ask students to define writing process.
- With a partner, ask students to discuss their writing process with one another: what works and what does not work. Allow them a couple minutes for discussion.
- Bringing the class back to large group, ask students if they follow the prescribed order of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing when they write. Bring about a discussion about how writing is messy and that things are not necessarily done in a linear order when we write.
- Students will then work on this reflective writing prompt, which is modified from Ann N. Amicucci prompt given in “Using Reflection to Promote Students Writing Process Awareness” (51) (the prompt should be made available to students on Canvas as an assignment titled “Reflecting on your Writing Process”):
  - A learning outcome for this course is “Practice the processes entailed in academic writing, including recursive processes for drafting texts, collaborative activities, the development of personalized strategies, and strategies for identifying and locating source materials.” Thinking about our discussion in class today, what
does the term “Writing process” mean to you? What is your own writing process like? (You might even think of a simile or metaphor for it.) Are there aspects of your writing process that work and you’ll use in this class? Are there aspects that are not effective and that you’d like to change in this class? How do you plan on improving your writing process in this course?

- Remember, these questions are here to get you thinking. You are not expected, and really should not, answer every question. Remember to keep the Rubric for Reflective Writing in mind.

(The rubric--Appendix B--should be uploaded to Canvas for students to access)

Activities for Day 2:

- Instruct students to go on Canvas to find the following writing prompt (modified from Amicucci 51-52)
  - Reflect on your writing process for this essay. What worked, what did not, what would you do differently? Re-read your reflective assignment on your writing process after the first essay. Did you follow your own advice? If so, did it work or not? Why? If not, what prevented you from following your own advice?

- Allow students up to 15 minutes to work on this prompt--should be turned in on Canvas.
- Class discussion with the students: how many of them felt like they made meaningful improvements to their writing process? How are they feeling about the reflective writing assignments, are they helping students improve their writing/thinking?
- Resume with class with other activities for the next essay.

Assessments:

- Formative Assessment: Class discussions (LO 3)
- Summative Assessment: Rubric for Reflective Writing (Appendix B) for reflective writing activities in both day one and day two (LO 3).
  - This could also be a formative assessment if the reflection is given a completion grade and the rubric is used to merely give students helpful feedback on improving reflections and not to give the reflection a grade.

Lesson 3: Reflecting while Drafting

Overview/Purpose:

- This lesson is designed to include the reflection in community aspect of John Dewey’s ideas on reflection. Students will focus on a single paragraph in their essay for this group project.
- This lesson can easily be adapted to focus on specific types of paragraphs. For example, if the focus for this assignment is counterarguments and rebuttals, then students could be required to bring that paragraph to group reflection.
- This lesson could easily be used multiple times throughout the year.
- This lesson connects to GSW LO’s 2, 3, and 6.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing
- Students will participate in collaborative peer review.
Materials needed

- Each student will need to come prepared to class with 4 copies of a paragraph (may include thesis statement on these copies) and 4 copies of their reflection/questions over this paragraph.
- Pens--bright colors, not black or navy blue. No pencil
- Highlighters

Prior to Class:

- Students will complete the Preparing for Collaborative Peer Review Paragraph Reflection (Appendix C) assignment.

Activities:

- Split the class up into groups of 3 and pass out pens and highlighters if needed.
  - Black, navy blue, and pencil do not stand out on paper, making it harder for the student writer to see marks on the paper. Encourage students to use brighter colors that are easier to see.
- Students will spend approximately 15 minutes on each student's paragraph
  - Student A will pass out her paragraph and reflective writing to her peer reviewers.
  - Peer reviewers will silently read both documents and mark up the paragraph.
  - Group discussion over Student A’s paragraph: discussion should start with a focus of Student A’s reflection but then may branch off from there.
  - Student A will then get the marked up copies from her peer reviewers.
  - Repeat with Students B and C.

Assessments:

- Formative Assessment: As students are working, make a point to sit down with each group during discussions over the paragraphs and just listen to their conversation (LO 2)
- Summative Assessment: Submitted student reflections over paragraphs to be graded based on rubric on assignment sheet (LO 3 and 6)

Lesson 4: Reflection to Research

Overview/Purpose:

- For this lesson, students will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses in a particular essay and then design their own mini-research projects that align with a weakness they believe their writing to have.
- This lesson will take at least 2 class periods. The second class period should be located at the university library so that students can utilize its resources more effectively. If possible, book an appointment with a librarian to help students with their research.
- This lesson aligns with GSW LO’s 2 and 5.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will critique their own writing.
- Students will develop a research question based on their reflection and conduct research to answer their question.

Materials Needed:

- Computers for students
Activities for Day 1: (should take place after returning Essay 3 or 4)
- Instruct students to open a document and to reflect on this prompt (projected, slide 2 of Reflection to Research Google Slides):
  - What did you do well on in this assignment and why do you think you did well on it? What were some weaknesses in your writing and why do you think you did not do well on it? What area do you think you need to improve the most for your next essay and how can you go about doing this?
- Pass out Reflection to Research assignment sheet (Appendix E) and explain it.
- Students will spend the rest of class fine tuning a research question and beginning to conduct some research.
- Homework: Students will post research question along with any good sources they have already found onto the discussion board “Reflection to Research Question.”

Activities for Day 2:
- Meet at the library in a computer lab.
- Students will have class time to do more research on their research question and to complete the Reflection to Research assignment. As students are working, circulate the room, help students find credible sources, and answering any additional questions about the assignment.

Assessments:
- Formative Assessment: Research question post (LO 2 and 5)
- Summative Assessment: Rubric for Reflection to Research assignment (LO 2 and 5)

Lesson 5: Final Course Reflection

Overview/Purpose:
- Students will reflect on their semester in the class, what they learned and what they still could improve upon.
- This will be done the last week of the course.
- This lesson aligns with all the GSW LOs as students will be reflecting on each LO.

Student Learning Objectives:
- Students will reflect on their learning throughout the semester.
- Students will reflect on the benefits of reflecting.
- Students will critique their writing to see what they still need to work on.

Materials Needed:
- Computers for each student
- Access to a presentation tool, such as Google Slides, Powerpoint, or Prezi
• Final Reflection Google Slides (Appendix F)
• Final Reflection assignment Sheet (Appendix G)--copies for each student and instructor

Activities:
• Instruct students to open up a document and to reflect on this prompt (projected, slide 2 on Final Reflection Google Slides):
  ○ How have you seen your writing improve this semester? How have you improved your writing process this semester?
• Ask students to share what they have written.
• Handout the Final Reflection assignment sheet (Appendix G) and go over it with the class. Show students the different presentation formats available to them: PowerPoint, Google Slides, and Prezi.

Assessments:
• Formative Assessment: Reflective writing prompt and discussion over it. And, although not in this lesson, subsequent classes before the end of the semester can include a teacher conference over a completed LO page to check students’ understanding of the assignment.
• Summative Assessment: Rubric on Final Reflection assignment sheet (LO 1-6)
Appendix A

**ACADEMIC AND REFLECTIVE WRITING**

**ACADEMIC WRITING**

**WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?**

**WHAT MAKES GOOD ACADEMIC WRITING? OR WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC WRITING?**

**REFLECTIVE WRITING**

**HOW DOES REFLECTIVE WRITING COMPARE TO ACADEMIC WRITING?**

**WHAT ARE YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES WITH REFLECTIVE WRITING?**

**STRONG REFLECTIVE WRITING INCLUDES...**

1. Description of feelings, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses
2. Analysis of the impact of experiences on learning
3. Integrating the analysis to the learning environment (e.g., new understanding or actions towards transformation)
4. Outcome of the reflection on future behaviors

*Taken from Muscle, N. et al. (2020). "Evaluating the Implementation and Effectiveness of Reflective Writing."*
**Rubric for Reflective Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Not included</th>
<th>Included</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of feelings, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis of the impact of feelings, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating your analysis to your learning environment: what is your new understanding or actions towards transformation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome of the reflection and of future behaviors (when applicable)</td>
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*adapted from Isabelle Boutet’s, et al., article, “Evaluating the Implementation and Effectiveness of Reflection Writing”*
Appendix C
Preparing for Collaborative Peer Review
Paragraph Reflection

Task:
1. Select a paragraph (if one has not been selected by the instructor) to be used for a collaborative peer review session. In this session, you and two of your peers will be reading over each other’s paragraph and discussing it.
2. Write a reflection over the paragraph you selected.

Questions for Reflection:
1. What do you see as triumphs in this paragraph?
2. What are you struggling with in this paragraph?
3. What questions do you have for your peer reviewers? Or, what would you specifically like them to focus on?

Length Requirements: 200 words or more

What to bring to class:
- 4 copies of both your paragraph and your reflection. One copy will need to be turned in to your instructor.
- Highlighter
- Bright pen (not black or navy blue)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you see as triumphs in this paragraph?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- specific evidence and reasoning is given</td>
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<td>-- correct terminology is used</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are you struggling with in this paragraph?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- specific evidence and reasoning is given</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- correct terminology is used</td>
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<tr>
<td>What questions do you have for your peer reviewers? Or, what would you specifically like them to focus on?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- These should focus on HOCs with maybe 1 or 2 LOCs.</td>
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</table>
Reflection to Research

What did you do well on in this assignment and why do you think you did well on it? What were some weaknesses in your writing and why do you think you didn’t do well on it? What area do you think you need to improve the most for your next essay and how can you go about doing this?
Appendix E
Reflection to Research Assignment
30 points

Task: Based on your last reflection assignment, develop a research question that will help you develop an area of weakness in your writing. Then find 5 resources that help you answer that question.

Components of the Research Assignment:
1. Research Question
2. Rationale behind the question: a short paragraph explaining why you chose this question. You may use writing from you reflective writing assignment.
3. Annotated Works Cited for 5 resources you found: provide an MLA Works Cited Entry and a brief explanation of what can be found in each resource.
4. Reflection: How did this research project help you better understand a writing concept? Provide evidence from your 5 resources. What resources did you find the most helpful? Do you have any further questions that your research has brought up?

Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions and Rationale:</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Evidence is provided that the research question deals with a concept that you struggle with in your writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Works Cited:</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Each source is correctly cited in MLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>--a short summary is included that explains what the resource is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection:</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Each resource is referenced in your reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>--You explain how the resources helped you better understand the concept.</td>
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Appendix F

Final Reflection

How have you seen your writing improve this semester? How have you improved your writing process this semester?
Appendix G

Final Reflection Assignment Sheet

Task: Create a multimodal text that helps show how you’ve grown as a writer in this class and how you still need to improve as a writer.

Identify at least 5 ways you feel like you’ve grown as a writer. You may use evidence from your essays, instructor comments, your reflection assignments and any other assignments or activities that we’ve done in class. You can use the course learning outcomes to help you develop ideas for how you’ve become a stronger writer.

Requirements:

- Identify 5 ways you’ve grown as a writer and 2 more ways you can still improve.
  - These need to be distinct ways. If one improvement is that you’ve gotten better at in-text citations, the other one can’t be that you’ve gotten better at Works Cited pages. Instead, do one improvement that says you’ve improved using MLA formatting.
- Evidence is concrete, accurate and is explained
  - Evidence can be from essays, instructor comments, reflection assignments, other assignments in class or activities.
  - By “concrete,” I mean that you can show that you’ve made the improvement, from one piece of writing to the other, or through an instructor comment, or by showing a piece of reflective writing.
- Explanation of Evidence:
  - Clear and concise
  - Reflects on how the improvement was made
- The document is aesthetically pleasing
  - Color
  - Fonts
  - Headings
  - Highlighters (such as boxes, arrows, lines, etc.)
  - Pictures if appropriate
    - Screenshots of essays
    - Clipart

Suggested Programs:
- Google Slides--you can make the slides 8.5x11
- Google Drawing
- PowerPoint
- Publisher
### GSW 1110 Course Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSW 1110 Course Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Ideas for How Writing has Improved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Engage in the electronic research and composing processes, including locating, evaluating,</td>
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<tr>
<td>disseminating, using and acknowledging research, both textual and visual, from popular and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>scholarly electronic databases.</td>
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<td>2. Demonstrate the importance of values systems in academic writing, including the abilities to</td>
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<tr>
<td>write effectively to audiences with opposing viewpoints, to participate in an active learning</td>
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<td>community that values academic honesty, and to recognize the place of writing within learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Practice the processes entailed in academic writing, including recursive processes for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>drafting texts, collaborative activities, the development of personalized strategies, and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>strategies for identifying and locating source materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge through writing in a variety of academic genres and to a</td>
<td></td>
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<td>variety of academic audiences.</td>
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<td>5. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of academic writing, including format and</td>
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<tr>
<td>documentation systems, coherence devices, conventional syntax, and control over surface features</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>such as grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through approaching academic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>writing assignments as a series of cognitive tasks, including engaging in multiple modes of</td>
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<tr>
<td>inquiry, synthesizing multiple points of view, critiquing student and professional writing, and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>assessing source materials.</td>
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</table>
Rubric for Final Reflection

Score: ______________/100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ways the author has improved and future</td>
<td>The author either does not provide 5 ways they have</td>
<td>Author identifies 5 ways they have become a better</td>
<td>Author identifies 5 ways they have become a stronger writer. Each improvement is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvements needed. (20%).</td>
<td>become a better writer or 3 or more improvements are</td>
<td>have become a better writer. 2 of the improvements are</td>
<td>distinct and different from the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>very similar.</td>
<td>similar in topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence (40%)</td>
<td>The author either does not have evidence for all</td>
<td>The author has evidence for each improvement, but</td>
<td>The Author has concrete evidence for each improvement they’ve identified. These</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improvements or 3 or more of pieces of evidence are</td>
<td>1-2 pieces of evidence is lacking in one of these</td>
<td>examples are accurate and it is explained how they show the improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lacking in one of these areas: --concreteness --</td>
<td>areas: --concreteness --accuracy --Explanation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accuracy --Explaination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations (25%)</td>
<td>Explanations for each improvement help explain what the</td>
<td>Explanations for each improvement help explain what the</td>
<td>Explanations for each improvement help explain what the evidence shows. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evidence help explain what the evidence shows. 3 or more</td>
<td>evidence shows. 1-2 of the explanations are lacking in</td>
<td>author is clear and concise and reflects on how the improvement was made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the explanations are lacking in one of these areas:</td>
<td>one of these areas: --clearness --conciseness --</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-clearness --conciseness --reflection on how improvement</td>
<td>-reflection on how improvement was made</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was made</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Quality (10%)</td>
<td>The author uses some fonts, colors, and visuals on the</td>
<td>The author uses fonts, colors, and visuals to make the</td>
<td>The author uses fonts, colors, and visuals to make the document look pleasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>document, but the document overwhelming looks like an essay.</td>
<td>document look pleasing. The document may look</td>
<td>Pages are not crowded. All text and visuals are easy to read and are not blurry (note,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or, many of pages are difficult to read.</td>
<td>overcrowded, or a few of the texts and visuals are not</td>
<td>I do know that screenshots are blurry on the Chromebooks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar (5%)</td>
<td>Several of the grammatical mistakes made make it difficult</td>
<td>There are a few grammatical mistakes throughout the</td>
<td>There are no grammatical mistakes throughout the document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to understand what the author is trying to say.</td>
<td>document, but they do not impair the reading of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>document.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


Dukewich, Kristie R. and Deborah P. Vossen. “Toward Accuracy, Depth and Insight: How Reflective Writing Assignments can be used to Address Multiple Learning Objectives in Small and Large Courses.” *CELT*, vol. VIII, 2015, pp. 97-110.

“I’m going to major in English” is a phrase that is often met with scrutiny. People do not see the value in studying literature in a world that focuses on marketable skills. This is shown when David Denby, author of “Do Teens Read Seriously Anymore?” writes, that in 2015 “at least fifteen state governments were offering some type of bonus or premium for high-demand stem degrees. ‘All the people in the world who want to study French literature can do so,’ Matt Bevin, the governor of Kentucky, said. ‘They’re just not going to be subsidized by the taxpayers like engineers will be, for example.’” Clearly, the value of studying and reading literature has diminished in our current society; however, this does not mean that we should stop reading literature. Literature needs to continued be read and discussed in the 21st century because it allows us to find ourselves and to better understand the world around us, and if we are able to do this, we can be better functioning members of the fast-past, skill-oriented world we live in.

Literature has the ability to help us during public dark times. Elaine Showalter in her text *Teaching Literature* writes, “Literature seems both irrelevant in tragedy and crucial in its power to console or illuminate” (133). An example of literature being both irrelevant and crucial can be seen in an example Showalter provides about Vijay Seshadri. A poet and teacher, Seshadri tried to resume his teaching of “Song of Myself” with his freshman poetry class after September 11. However Seshadri found his students to be “‘defiantly resistant to Whitman’ (Showalter 135). But for Seshadri, who is a poet and a teacher of literature, the poem had more meaning for him;
he illustrates how literature helps us make meaning of the events around us. When teaching the poem again, he realized “that his own emotions had been transferred to Whitman in an experience that was cathartic for him” (Showalter 135). Seshadri says, “It gave me a way to hold the event in my mind, to come closer to it, and not be afraid” (Showalter 136). There are many reasons to explain why Sheshadri found solace in the poem and his students did not. One could be that poetry in general holds deeper meaning for him than it does for his students because he is a poet. Another possibility is that he is there in the poetry classroom willingly while his students may be taking the class simply to meet graduation requirements. Despite the fact that Seshadri’s students did not find solace in the poem, Seshadri was able to find comfort in it, and it helped him make meaning of the public event and the impact it had on him.

Literature can also help someone during a personal dark time. Ceridwen Dovey, author of “Can Reading Make you Happier?” published in The New Yorker, writes about The School of Life located in London. The School of Life practices bibliotherapy, the practice of reading for therapeutic purposes. Dovey shares the experience of one client who was dealing with the loss of “her husband, the end of a five-year engagement, and a heart attack.” After the client discussed the lack of purpose in her life due to these tragedies with her bibliotherapist, Ella Berthoud, Berthoud prescribed her books to help her through this personal dark time:

Among the books Berthoud initially prescribed was John Irving’s novel “The Hotel New Hampshire.”[sic] “He was a favorite writer of my husband, [whom] I had felt unable to attempt for sentimental reasons.” She was “astounded and very moved” to see it on the list, and though she had avoided reading her husband’s books up until then, she found reading it to be “a very rewarding emotional experience, both in the literature itself and ridding myself of demons.” (Dovey)
In this way, Berthoud’s client was able to heal her soul by reading Irving’s book. And she is not the only person who has had this type of positive experience with literature. Dovey herself discovered literature’s therapeutic benefits during a personal dark time: “some of the insights I gleaned from these [prescribed] books helped me through something entirely different, when, over several months, I endured acute physical pain.” As seen through Sheshadri, Berthoud’s client, and Dovey, literature has healing powers. Reading literature allows us to move beyond the dark times in our lives. If we can make sense of these dark times and move beyond them, we can once again become happy, functioning members of society. In a society that focuses heavily on deadlines and customer satisfaction, happy employees are a must. Andrew J. Oswald and his colleagues published their research on workplace happiness in an article titled “Happiness and Productivity.” In their research, they discovered that those employees who were given “happiness treatments” showed a 10-12% increase in their productivity (Oswald et al. 790). This is why literature is still relevant in the 21st century. Literature has the ability to make people happier, and happier people function better in today’s high-demand environment.

Aside from public and personal dark times, our happiness can be compromised by the stress we experience. Today’s high-demand workplace environment has the tendency to cause stress in many people, and this stress has adverse effects on their health. The American Institute of Stress reports that

“[n]umerous studies show that job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults and that it has escalated progressively over the past few decades. Increased levels of job stress as assessed by the perception of having little control but lots of demands have been demonstrated to be associated with increased rates of heart attack, hypertension and other disorders. (‘Workplace Stress’)”
If people are experiencing high levels of stress and their health is affected, there is a chance that they will either not be as productive while at work because they are unhappy or that they will miss work because of their health issues. Literature can help people reduce their stress. Dovey states in her article that “[r]eading has been shown to put our brains into a pleasurable trance-like state, similar to meditation, and it brings the same health benefits of deep relaxation and inner calm. Regular readers sleep better, have lower stress levels, higher self-esteem, and lower rates of depression than non-readers.” By encouraging people to read, by teaching people to value reading, we can help them have a tool in their arsenal for dealing with the stress in their lives. This in turn will make them happier, which benefits everyone.

Another benefit of literature is the connections we can gain through it. Literature can help us make connections with others over bonded experiences with characters and with other readers. Book clubs are a perfect example of this. People are able to bond over the shared experience of a reading and in the discussion over the reading, they may share how they connected with the book on a more personal level. Such connections--both with the literature and with other readers--can most notably be seen with the discussion that sparked around the short story “Cat Person.” “Cat Person,” written by Kristen Roupenian and published in The New Yorker, focuses on an awkward sexual experience between a 20-year-old woman, Margot, and an older man, Robert. Margot goes on a date with Robert and ends up going back to his house with him. She consents to sex, but then is disgusted by him as he undresses:

Looking at him like that, so awkwardly bent, his belly thick and soft and covered with hair, Margot recoiled. But the thought of what it would take to stop what she had set in motion was overwhelming...It wasn’t that she was scared he would try to force her to do something against her will but that insisting that they stop now, after everything she’d
done to push this forward, would make her seem spoiled and capricious, as if she’d
ordered something at a restaurant and then, once the food arrived, had changed her mind
and sent it back. (Roupenian)

Margot ends up having sex with Robert, but does not enjoy it. When he texts her the next day she
is “overwhelmed with a skin-crawling loathing that felt vastly disproportionate to anything he
had actually done” (Roupenian). The story got significant attention on social media and other
media sources. *Vox*, an online opinion and explanatory journalism website, published Constance
Grady’s article, “The Uproar over the *New Yorker* Short Story ‘Cat Person,’ Explained.”

According to Grady, “Cat Person” is praised because of its “eerie accuracy in depicting what
dating is like for a 20-year-old woman.” Grady goes on to share a tweet by Dana Schwartz.

Schwartz, in her tweet, says, “I can’t remember the last time I read a short story so brutally and
uncomfortably relatable” (@DanaSchwartzzz). With the tweet was a link to the short story.

Schwartz was able to make a connection to the literature and to start a discussion on it,
communicating her thoughts and ideas with others. Her tweet had 121 replies, 1,321 retweets,
and 4,284 likes (@DanaSchwartzzz), showing how widely her comment travelled and sparked
discussion, showing how many connections were made because of “Cat Person.” During this
discussion, observations were made about our society. In a reply to Schwartz, Brash Brandi Boot
tweeted, “It seemed to me a lot of these decisions to not follow her gut were out of a desire to not
‘be mean’ or hurt his feelings. You could argue that this is a product of her youth, or being
socialized as a female, probably both” (@sagal_adam). Boot’s reply demonstrates how “Cat
Person” makes a cultural observation about how women are expected to behave in today’s
society. Boots and Schwartz also point out a problem with our current dating model: Schwartz
confirms that a similar scenario has happened to her in real life (unlike the fictional scenario in
the story) and Boots brings up the idea that Margot (and by extension Schwartz) does this because of societal pressures on women. Because these women were able to understand and identify with Margot’s motives, attention is brought to a problem in our dating culture. George Levine, in his essay “Reclaiming the Aesthetic,” writes, “Literature can act powerfully to hold the political and the ethical up for scrutiny by means of its power of suspension, momentarily dissociating them from their usually pressing context, performing the ethical decision and the political gestures” (385). This is what happened with the discussion surrounding “Cat Person.” Once Schwartz was able to make a connection and then had the desire to share this connection with other people in the world, a discussion was sparked that helped bring meaning to why Margot—and other women such as Schwartz—acted the way they did. If we are able to understand our actions and why they happen, we are then better able to change our actions for better. In this way, the connections we make through literature can help us better understand ourselves and others.

Literature also has the ability to provide us with insights into unfair societal expectations, pressures, and norms. This happens because as Eagleton explains, we tend to respond and evaluate literature based on society's values. Scrutiny, a 1932 literary critical journal, “insisted that how one evaluated literary works was deeply bound up with deeper judgments about the nature of history and society as a whole” (Eagleton 56). This is clearly seen by the tweets that many men felt the need to write in response to “Cat Person.” These tweets often showed a sexist attitude commonly found in our society, which remains highly patriarchal. A tweet by John Martinez demonstrates how literature can help us understand our society’s cultural biases. Martinez tweeted, “This was horribly juvenile and convoluted attempt at ‘college life’ and I’m going to assume Kristen, the author of this dreck, is really only 18 and has read too much Judy
Blume in between fan erotica online. This was shit” (Grady). Martinez sees Margot's experience as juvenile and unworthy to be called literature and even goes so far as to attack the author for writing this story, presumably because it deals with a girl’s sexual encounter and her inability to speak up for herself. However, as Grady points out, “A story like John Updike’s ‘A&P,’ in which a man watches women and thinks about how hot they are, is a literary classic that is regularly taught in high schools.” It could be said that Updike’s story is juvenile, as this is what one thinks of a typical high school boy doing. Yet, it is deemed a literary classic. Furthermore, another tweet written by David Fair also demonstrates this lack of respect for women authors: “This wreaks of the personal self-involved literature like ‘Catcher in the Rye’ yet Salinger channeled something that he was not. All this channels is a technically proficient diatribe about a personal experience. I felt like I just read someone’s facebook [sic] post and nothing more” (Grady). These tweets by Martinez and Fair point out the negative cultural assumptions and biases our society has about women authors as well as about women’s sexual concerns and exploits: neither are taken seriously and both are seen as trivial, juvenile. The reactions to “Cat Person,” demonstrate the imbalance of power in our society when it comes to sexual encounters. Furthermore, the tweets by Boots, Martinez and Fair helps show the underlying cultural biases and unfair expectations seen in our society.

Why is it important that we are able to identify, understand, and discuss imbalances of power in the 21st century? The answer is simple. These imbalances lead to unhappiness in those that are seen as inferior. And as discussed earlier, those who are unhappy tend to be less productive members of society. In addition to this, inequality can affect a person’s mental health. Sheri Johnson and her colleagues, authors of “The Dominance Behavioral System and
Psychopathology: Evidence from Self-Report, Observational, and Biological Studies,” explains how inequality causes mental health issues:

the DBS [dominance behavior system] profile that emerges for the internalizing disorders of depression and anxiety involves motivation to avoid inferiority, engagement in submissive behavior, and low self-perceived power or subordination, as assessed by both self-report and observational ratings. Many of the social triggers of depression fit with a model of subordination.

The dominance behavior system--defined as “biologically-based system which guides dominance motivation, dominant and subordinate behavior, and responsivity to perceptions of power and subordination”--for depression and anxiety correlate with acts of submission. So women, who see themselves in a submissive position such as Margot and Schwartz did, may be more inclined to depression and anxiety. Some may ask, why is literature needed to help show these imbalances? Can’t nonfiction texts such as news stories do the job? Martha C. Nussbaum has the answer in her essay “The Literary Imagination.” Nussbaum explains why literature is the ideal genre for these discussions:

One may be told many things about people in one’s own society and yet keep that knowledge at a distance. Literary works that promote identification and emotional reaction cut through those self-protective stratagems, requiring us to see and to respond to many things that may be difficult to confront---and they make this process palatable by giving us pleasure in the very act of confrontation. (359)

When a person reads a piece of nonfiction, for example, if they had read a news story of Stormy Daniels’ account of her night with Donald Trump, which has a similar storyline as Margot’s experience with Robert--not rape but not enthusiastic consent, people are able to distance
themselves more because they can easily find differences between themselves and Daniels and/or Trump. But in a piece of fiction, we are often immersed in the characters thoughts and actions, making it easier for us to identify with the fictional characters than when we read a story. As Levine explains, “literature...functions within a society to help create a desirable community” (387). And this desirable community can only be achieved if are able to articulate the inequality in our society.

Literature remains important in the 21st century because it provides a way for us to better understand ourselves and the events that we encounter and because it helps us make sense of the world we live in. These are the skills that are important and these are the skills that are not being taught enough in the US. Every year in the US, nearly 45,000 people die because of suicide according to The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (“Suicide Statistics”). And for every successful suicide, there are an estimated 25 attempts (“Suicide Statistics”). This is substantial. Literature will not fix everything: that is not a possibility. But if we can teach people to see the value in literature, this can be another arsenal in the toolbox if someone is going through a dark time, whether that dark time is a result of a public event, personal crisis, stress at work, or a general unhappiness due to inequality.
Works Cited


@sagal_adam. “It seemed to me a lot of these decisions to not follow her gut were out of a desire to not "be mean" or hurt his feelings. You could argue that this is a product of her youth, or being socialized as a female, probably both. I think the takeaway though is that to someone/.” Twitter, 11 Dec. 2017, https://twitter.com/sagal_adam/status/940249128306487297. Access 20 February 2018.


Peer Review in the High School Writing Classroom: Benefits, Preparations, and Strategies

As an undergraduate, I worked as a writing consultant at a writing center for three years. Working with my peers on their papers allowed me to realize how important peer review is in the writing process. The practice of peer review carried over to my teaching, and I have seen positive results from the peer review activities I have implemented. My students learn that peer review is a vital part of the writing process. NCTE agrees that students interacting with each other during the writing process is important: “Students should be encouraged to comment on each other's writing, as well as receiving frequent, prompt, individualized attention from the teacher. Reading what others have written, speaking about one's responses to their writing, and listening to the responses of others are important activities in the writing classroom. Textbooks and other instructional resources should be of secondary importance.” NCTE sees the value of peer review to be so high that they have ranked it as more beneficial than textbooks and other resources. Peer review should be used in the high school writing classroom because it makes students better writers; however, to make sure that these benefits are seen, teachers need to not only spend time preparing students for peer review, but they also need to use effective scaffolding during peer review.

Benefits of Using Peer Review

Peer Review has some obvious benefits for students when it comes to their writing and one of these benefits comes from the act of writing comments. Gary M. Woodward, author of
“Peer Review in the Classroom: Is it beneficial?” explains that commenting on another student’s paper actually helps student writers become stronger writers more than just passively receiving comments from a teacher or peer (44). Building on Woodward’s argument, Jacques Crinon and Brigitte Marin, authors of “The Role of Peer Feedback in Learning to Write Explanatory Texts: Why the Tutors Learn the Most” published in *Language Awareness* help explain why this is the case: “the givers or ‘tutors’ on the other hand, often apply to their own texts the suggestions they give others” while the “receivers [of the comments] more frequently make very specific local edits, applying only part of the suggestions that are given” (117). Therefore, teachers who fear that strong writers will not benefit from peer reviewing with a struggling writer can quell their fears. The strong writers may actually be learning more from the act of leaving comments. The benefits for the struggling writer remain clear: they are getting strong feedback as well as being exposed to what good writing looks like.

Another benefit for peer review is that students become more aware that their writing is meant to be read. Crinon and Marin explain that “a partner’s feedback creates a communication situation which raises a student’s awareness that he is writing something to be read...Students faced with readers’ reactions become increasingly able to anticipate the reader’s needs” (112). Students often only see their teacher as their audience for an essay as most of their writing does not get published formally. Because of this, the students may assume some of the teachers knowledge and not explain themselves as much as possible. For example, if a student is writing a paper over *The Great Gatsby*, a student may not provide a quote that helps show that Tom is trying to fill a void in his life if this topic was discussed during class. The student may not provide sufficient evidence for an audience outside of classroom. Peer review helps fix this problem.
Peer response can also be beneficial to students outside of the writing classroom. According to the Debby Ellis Writing Center, peer response teaches students to value one another’s opinions and to learn from each other. It also provides students with the experience of giving effective feedback, which some students may do in their careers after high school if they take on a managerial position. According to Claire Hoogendoorn, a doctoral student at CUNY Graduate Center who focuses on writing pedagogy and WAC, peer response also has the added benefit of making students comfortable with receiving both positive and negative feedback, a valuable trait no matter what career students choose later in life.

A Concern with Peer Review

With peer review having so many benefits, it is easy to see why it should be implemented in the writing process. However, sometimes this is easier said than done. Teachers may find it difficult to trust their students to leave quality feedback, as The PIT Core Publishing Collective shares in their article, “Peersourcing: A Definition, Justification, and Application.” Since peer review may replace a draft with teacher’s comment on it, some teachers may not trust students to leave “‘meaningful and substantive ‘high quality’ feedback to one another during in-class peer review workshops” (Pit Core). Students themselves even cite the lack of quality feedback as a problem with peer review. Jenny, an undergraduate at UNC, explains, “student writers in peer review workshops all-too-often receive empty comments and thus will more likely provide empty comments themselves” (qtd. in Pit Core 109). To help prevent these low-quality, empty comments from happening, teachers need to implement instruction on what effective peer review is and model what it looks like. Sheri Rysdam and Lisa Johnson-Shull agree with this assertion in their article “From Cruel to Collegial: Developing a Professional Ethic in Peer Response to Student Writing.” Rysdam and Johnson-Shull write, “New recommendations within several
professional fields suggest that effective peer review needs to be explicitly taught and mentored” (87). As with anything in the writing classroom—or any classroom—time needs to be made to teach students a new process or to address misconceptions and concerns about a process and peer review is no exception to this.

**Peer Review Preparation**

To ensure that peer review runs smoothly and that students are leaving quality feedback, teachers need to spend a few days throughout the semester teaching peer review. When preparing students for peer review, it is important to not only teach them what to focus their comments on, but to also teach them what good comments look like. And once they understand what to comment on and how to effectively comment, it is helpful to take time to model what peer review looks like.

Teachers should start preparing students for peer review by teaching them the difference between Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) and Lower Order Concerns (LOCs). HOCs consist of the following elements of a paper: argument, evidence, organization, clarity, and content. LOCs are the surface errors: sentence structure, mechanics, and grammar. This needs to be taught because many students see peer review as a task “to identify error rather than to provide guidance for improvements” (Rysdam and Johnson-Shull 82). LOCs tend to be the errors that are easy to spot and correct so they are what students leave comments on. Muriel Harris identifies this same student mentality in her afterword to the book *Peer Pressure, Peer Power*. Harris writes, “viewing the role of the tutor as spotting problems, but mostly correcting mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and spelling...they [student tutors] are hindered by conceiving of feedback simply as negative criticism and/or as grammar checking” (282). Although Harris is talking about student tutors, students in the classroom have the same thought process as tutors are
students in the classroom. This view on the purpose of peer review hinders the peer review process as students’ comments should mostly focus on HOCs. An exception to this might be if a teacher has emphasized a particular LOC for the given assignment, such as dangling modifiers or using colons and semicolons correctly. Another time it would be appropriate to leave a comment about an LOC would be if there is a recurring LOC issue. If this is the case, students should be instructed to comment on one occurrence of the issue and to inform the writer that this was seen throughout the essay. Otherwise, LOCs should be reserved for an editing day. Once students understand the difference between HOCs and LOCs, teachers can then instruct students on how to leave helpful comments about HOCs.

There are four types of helpful comments: additive, reader response, value, and questioning. All of these comment types fall within the developmental approach to peer review, which is when “the reviewer agrees to maintain a horizontal writer-to-writer dialogue when offering suggestions for improvement, rather than a stance of arrogant admonishment” (Rysdam and Johnson-Shull). According to the Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan, additive comments focus on what the writer could add or develop in his/her essay to make it stronger. To make these comments even more effective, the commenter should explain why he/she believes this item should be added or developed. This helps students avoid leaving empty comments like “Need a source here.” Students need to explain why a source is needed (“Using Peer Review”). The Sweetland Center also explains what a reader response comment looks like. These comments are students’ thoughts on the essay as they read. Such comments explain why the commenter may have been confused by a choice the writer made. An example of this type of comment might look like “The topic sentence of this paragraph led me to expect you to focus on X, so I was confused that there was so much Y and Z in this paragraph instead.”
Napierata (qtd. in Sweetland Center, “Using Peer Review”). These types of comments allow the writer to better understand how the confusion was caused. By teaching student reviewers to construct this type of comment, writers can better understand their weaknesses. Richard Chisholm, in his article “Introducing Students to Peer Review of Writing” explains the third type of helpful comment: the value comment (11). These comments focus on the positives of the paper. The commenter explains what he/she liked about the paper and why. This lets the writer know what his/her strengths are and why they are a strength. Not only do these types of comments boost the writer’s confidence, but they also help the peer reviewer internalize the writing practice being commented on because they have to be able to understand the writing concept well enough to explain it. The final type of helpful comment is the questioning comment. The commenter asks questions to help point out unclear areas of the essay. This lets the writer know that he/she could develop an idea more or that there is a gap in the ideas/research presented (Chisholm 11-12). A question, rather than a statement, will get the writer thinking and will prevent the peer reviewer from simply telling the writer what to put in his/her paper. All of these comment types aim at preventing the empty, low-quality comments that both teachers and students dread in the peer review process. But simply addressing helpful comments is not enough.

To ensure that the empty comments do not happen, students need to know what types of comments are unhelpful. The Sweetland Center, on their page titled “Using Peer Review to Improve Student Writing,” has identified three types of unhelpful comments: overly general comments, attack comments, and repetitive comments. Overly general comments are vague: they just say that something is or is not working well, but they do not explain why. These comments do not help the writer improve his/her writing or understand why something is working well in their writing. Attack comments negatively evaluate the writer or the ideas in the essay. Students
should also be explicitly taught to avoid attack comments because they go against the very nature of peer review and because writing is a very personal activity. In addition to this, Rysdam and Johnson-Shull discovered that in a study where 150 students engaged in peer response over the exact same essay, forty percent of the comments left on the essay fell under what they called the failure/meanness category (81). This is a significantly high percentage, and it shows that students can default to attack comments during peer review. Teachers should not assume that their students know better than to leave a mean comment; they should make a point to discuss and provide examples of unacceptable attack comments. In addition to learning to avoid attack comments, students should also avoid leaving repetitive comments. Twenty comments about capitalization are not helpful to the writer. In this instance, the writer will tend to get overwhelmed by the sheer number of comments. Instead, students should be instructed to leave a single comment and to let the writer know the error was seen throughout the essay.

Once students have learned not only what HOCs and LOCS are but what types of comments are helpful and unhelpful, students are ready to practice peer review. Teachers should spend a class period modeling peer review for and with their students. Modeling peer review will allow students to see the thought process behind leaving helpful comments. This modeling could take several different forms. Woodward likes to use published pieces of work for modeling peer review because “students who interrogate models by published authors have a better understanding of how each genre works and demonstrate greater confidence when giving feedback about writing” (44). Chisholm models peer review with his students with an essay he wrote about peer review. Not only are students reading about what peer review is and its benefits, but they are also participating in peer review while doing it. Carroll Hauptle, author of “Liberating Dialogue in Peer Review: Applying Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process to the
Writing Classroom,” wrote, “I also generated a draft of their first assignment, into which I had deliberately inserted both grammatical and substance errors” (173). He notes that students even found errors he had “not deliberately inserted” (173). No matter what type of modeling method used, it may be helpful to have students read the common essay for homework and to leave their own comments on it first. This way they will have something to contribute to the conversation about the essay, and they can evaluate their own comments throughout the discussion and decide if they left more helpful or unhelpful comments. Students could even engage in a quick three minute reflection on the quality of the comments they left on the draft for their homework the night before. This would allow them to see if their comments were effective or not.

**Peer Review Strategies**

Even when students are well prepared for peer-review, there is no guarantee that peer review will run smoothly or be devoid of problems. However, there are several strategies teachers can use during the actual peer review process to help it run smoothly and to help ensure that all students are able to give quality feedback.

The first strategy is a peer review guide. Peer review guides do exactly what the name suggests: guide students through the peer review process by asking them to perform specific tasks. Courtney L. Werner, author of “Not Just Checkboxes: Using Tables to Guide Peer Review” has her student writers fill out a form (appendix A). Werner writes,

> In the first table, the writer identifies one or more of her paragraphs (or other components) with which she has struggled. For each paragraph she identifies, she writes a deep description about why this particular paragraph/element has caused her trouble. Then she uses the table to ask reviewers what types of feedback she would like in regards to this paragraph. (262)
Werner’s handout creates a line of communication between the writer and reviewer that helps give focus to the reviewer’s comments, and hopefully eliminates empty comments. In addition to this, Werner’s handout asks the reviewer to comment on one additional paragraph and gives the reviewer a checklist of other tasks to complete. Since student writers are not always the best at pinpointing their weaknesses, this can be an extra helpful step for the commenter to do. Werner is not the only person who recommends using handouts to guide peer review. Michelle LaFrance, author of “An Example of a Guided Peer Review,” uses guides that are crafted around each assignment to reflect the goals of the particular assignment (268). She also tries to keep her guide down to four or five elements so that the students do not get overwhelmed (268). Hauptle agrees that the guides should be simplified. He writes, “Providing students with an overly detailed set of criteria for peer review smacks of doing students’ work for them...Detailed roadmaps also detract from the sense of ownership that students should have in their work” (Hauptle 174). Hauptle prefers guidance to be simplified so that “students seem to ‘own’ their comments, rather than merely trying to locate what they have been asked to find” (174). If students feel a sense of ownership with their comments, they will feel less like peer review is simply a task to complete for the teacher; they will see it as a valuable step in the writing process and will put more thought and effort into their comments.

A second strategy that can be used to implement peer review is the comment letter. The Sweetland Center suggests using comment letters during peer review. These are “mini-essays that analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a draft and make suggestions for revision” (Sweetland Center, “How to Write”). Rather than leaving comments throughout a paper, a student reviewer will read the essay and then write a separate paper. This paper should summarize what the peer reviewer saw as the essay’s argument as well as explain what worked
well in the paper and what did not work well in the paper (Sweetland Center, “How to Write”). By having students write comments on a new document, teachers can help prevent LOC comments and empty comments as students will need to put more thought into the papers strengths and weaknesses to construct the comment letter.

Another helpful method to use when implementing peer review is by creating a student-led discussion around a single paper. Hauptle explains that Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process helps create a meaningful dialogue between the writer and the reviewer(s) through a facilitator while allowing the writer to feel like she has kept ownership of her writing. There are four steps to Lerman’s Critical Response Process. Step one, “Statements of Meaning”, is where the facilitator asks the reviewers what they liked or thought was memorable about the writing. The facilitator calls on responders to share what they liked about the piece of writing. This first step is only about the positives seen in the paper. Step two, “Artist’s Questions” is where the writer, not the facilitator, asks the reviewers questions about his/her writing. These questions should be areas of concerns that the writer has about his/her writing. Step three, “Neutral Questions” is where the reviewers are able to ask judgement free questions to the writer: “How does the title encapsulate the argument in your paper?” Or “Which point do you see being your strongest?” Or “Why did you decide to put your points in this order?” The fourth step, “Permissioned Opinions” is where the responders are able to express their opinions; however, the writer has control over what types of opinions they want to hear. The writer controls this part of the conversation by first asking the responder to identify the topic of their opinion--such as thesis statement or transition sentences. If the writer agrees to hear the opinion, the responder may continue to share with the group (Hauptle 170-172). The verbal dialogue created between the reviewers and the writer allows for a more lively, in-depth discussion about the paper where
follow up questions can be asked to help with clarification. Since students are less likely to spend much time talking grammar in a discussion like this, the focus will be on HOCs rather than on LOCs. The downside to this activity is that it can be time consuming. This may work best on chunks of a paper, such as just the introduction or with a single body paragraph. Or, students could be assigned to read papers outside of class in order to prepare for discussion in class. This would allow for more papers to be reviewed in a given class period.

Many teachers may think that peer review is just for written essays. It can in fact be used for more creative projects as well by implementing a multimodal peer review format. Teresa Henning explains in her article, “Multimodal Peer Review for a Multimedia Project: Lessons in Classroom Authority” how she ran her multimodal peer review in two sessions: “a storyboard peer review session and a multimedia draft peer review session” (127). For the storyboard session, Henning set up what she calls a gallery walk and students went from one brainstormed project to the next, leaving a comment on each project. Henning provided four criteria for the storyboards that her students used to focus their comments. After the gallery walk, students then discussed what they liked about each storyboard as well as places the writer could strengthen their storyboard. At the end of class, Henning allowed students to ask each other for suggestions on how to improve certain aspects of their storyboard (Henning 128-130). For the multimedia session, students watched each other’s presentations then spent a few minutes discussing what they thought. As they watched, they filled out a worksheet to help focus their feedback. Henning notes that allowing students to see other projects prompted students to question what they did in their own projects: is it too simple, too short, etc. (Henning 130-132). Overall, Henning’s peer review structure allowed students to see what others were doing to better see the expectations for the project and genre. Henning’s structure can easily be adapted and altered to fit a variety of
multimodal projects. Henning used peer review guides for both sessions to help ensure that students had ideas for what to say. This is extremely important when doing peer review on a multimodal project as students may be less familiar with how to comment on these types of projects than with a paper.

**Conclusion**

Many educators are hesitant to use peer review in their classroom because it does take time to prep students for the activity: a day to discuss what HOC and LOCs are and to discuss what helpful and unhelpful comments look like, a day to model, and then a day (maybe two) for the actual activity of peer review. In an atmosphere that is constantly putting pressure on teachers to meet standards and to “teach to the test,” three to four days can seem like a lot of time to spend on one activity. However, the benefits for the students--both within the classroom and beyond the classroom--help justify taking those few days to prep and implement the activity with students. Once it has been taught, if used often enough, only a short review of the expectations for the activity is needed and students will be ready for the activity again. In addition, teachers can not forget the additional benefits for themselves: peer review can help alleviate grading of rough drafts and help teachers hit some of the Speaking and Listen standards for Common Core. With all of these benefits, who can say no to peer review?
HANDOUT GUIDE

(Insert brief reminder of prompt)

Writer's Name:
Reviewer's Name:

Directions for the Writer:
1. Using the chart below, list 1-3 paragraphs you would like your reviewer to give special attention to.
2. List what you think is not working in these paragraphs and what type of feedback you think would help you. Be as specific as you possibly can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph Number</th>
<th>Trouble you're having</th>
<th>Feedback you'd like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Directions for the Reviewer:
1. Using the chart below, give the writer specific advice on how to improve the paragraphs s/he asked for help on.
2. Then, give advice for one other paragraph that you think could be developed more in terms of big-picture issues. Be as specific as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph Number</th>
<th>Feedback for Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

What did you think was the best part of this essay? Explain in detail why this was so good (the more detail, the better?).

Directions for the Reviewer: Place an “X” in the first column (the “Completed” column) to indicate if the Writer has included the element in her/his project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7+ paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate section titles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800-1600 words (check for word count NOT including the author's name, title, date, course number, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each paragraph has a Point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each paragraph has at least one Illustration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each paragraph has some Explanation tying the Illustration to the Point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second-person pronouns are avoided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words like “one” and “you” are avoided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>File is saved in the appropriate format (.doc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


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13 December 2017

Understanding the Meaning, not just Finding the Error:

Four Weeks of Grammar in the Context of Writing Mini-lessons

Rationale for Lesson Plans

The prospect of teaching grammar is something that has always frightened me, even though grammar was a topic that was easy for me in English class. The question that lingered in my head as I planned my lessons was “Where to start?” Doing what my teachers did, I started with the parts of speech. I relied on the Traditional School Grammar (TSG) approach (worksheets, finding errors, labeling and dissecting sentences). Edgar Schuster, in his book *Breaking the Rules: Liberating Writers through Innovative Grammar Instruction*, points out that “teachers often teach not only what they have been taught--a point well established by educational researcher John Goodlad--but also what they think the community expects them to teach” (6). I knew grammar should be taught, if for nothing else, because my students take the ACT and SAT, and probably because grammar is taught in the English classroom. I was taught in TSG; therefore, I taught TSG.

However, as Schuster points out (and as I quickly learned), TSG does not work well. Schuster discusses in his opening Finlay McQuade, a teacher who discovered that his Editorial Skills class did nothing to improve his students’ writing and grammar skills. In this class, he had textbooks, worksheets, tests, and exercises that focused on errors (Schuster xviii). Student who
took Editorial Skills scored about the same on the grammar assessment as students who did not take the class.

Connie Weaver, in her book, *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*, helps explain why many of McQuade’s students failed their grammar assessment: “Teaching grammar as a separate subject divorced from writing wastes valuable instructional time because few students transfer their grammar study to writing without teacher guidance” (Weaver, *Grammar to Enhance*) 7. This is exactly what McQuade saw happen. On essays his students wrote after the course, only basic grammar concepts were learned, nothing complex (Schuster xix). Expanding on Weaver’s point, Lynne Weber, author of “The Write Way to Teach Grammar: Using Grammatical Elements to Improve Student Writing” explains why students do not transfer their knowledge in the TSG approach in the context of Bloom’s Taxonomy: “[Students] learn grammar only on the ‘remember’ or ‘knowledge’ level but do not not progress to ‘understand,’ ‘apply,’ ‘analyze,’ ‘evaluate,’ or ‘synthesize/create’” (2). By teaching grammar in the context of writing, students are much more likely to reach the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy with their grammar knowledge because they have to think about and understand the rhetorical situation when trying to use the grammar concept effectively.

For these reasons, I have designed a framework that has students incorporating grammar concepts into their writing as they are learning them. Weaver explains, “Grammar taught in conjunction with writing will be most effective when reinforced through more than one phase of the process and with numerous writing situations and assignments” (Weaver, *Grammar to Enhance*) 8. The handouts (appendix A-D) I created have students doing several different activities that require them to not only analyze how the grammar concept is being used, but to also look at the different ways to incorporate the concept into their writing: matching,
unscrambling, deconstructing, imitating, combining sentences, writing their own sentences in isolation, and finally, using the term in a writing piece of their own. This framework is heavily influenced by Weaver and by Don and Jenny Killgallon, authors of *Grammar for High School: A Sentence-Composing Approach*.

An important component of my framework is imitating (something borrowed from Killgallon). When students are imitating sentences, they are imitating sentences written by professionals. In his essay, “Sentence Composing: Notes on a New Rhetoric,” Don Killgallon explains that “Repeated classroom exposure to sentences of professional writers...elicits attention to, understanding of, and, with practice, possession of those same structures….students learn to manipulate syntax to produce sentences that are structurally mature, coherent, organized and stylistically varied” (173). To help students learn to imitate the professional sentences, Killgallon first has students play a matching game with sentences that has students analyzing the structure and context of each part of the sentence, which will help them reach the “understand” level of Bloom’ Taxonomy for the grammar concept being taught.

Another impact on my framework is Weaver’s framework for teaching grammar. There are several of her steps that can be seen in my own 5 day framework (Weaver, *Grammar to Enhance* 63). Weaver’s step one is share a model. This can be seen in my day one activities as I included several professional sentences that use the grammar concept at hand. Step two is for the teacher to create a model either with or without the students’ help. The day one activities for each week instruct the teacher to write another model on the board, walking the students through the process of writing the sentence. The third and fourth steps in Weaver’s plan is to have students compose their own sentence, first in small groups and then individually. This is done throughout the weekly lessons, but most notably in the day two lessons where students are first
asked to write a sentence that imitates the model sentence. Step five in Weaver’s framework has students applying the concept in their own writing. This can be seen in Day 5 when students have a Writing Workshop day and are asked to incorporate the grammar concept into their writing. Teachers are also encouraged to have students use the grammar concept in other writing that is completed that week. And finally, the last step I used from Weaver’s framework was her step six which is where students are expected to get teacher or peer feedback. Throughout my lessons, students are encouraged to share their writing with each other and the teacher will also be walking around checking their writing and giving them feedback. By incorporating Weaver’s steps into my framework, I am hoping that students will develop a deeper understanding of the grammar concepts covered so that they remember how to use these concepts effectively beyond my classroom.

Although not directly built into the lessons, it is strongly suggested that in order for my adapted framework to be effective, there should be other meaningful ways in addition to these minilessons to incorporate the grammar concept into lessons. This can take the form of students looking for examples in the texts they read and using them in writing assignments other than in their Friday Writing Workshop Days. It is also strongly suggested that recap weeks are periodically done. This is where students can review the different concepts taught already and try to incorporate more than one grammar concept into their writing, so that they are exposed to varying situations of when they would use the concept. By doing all this, it is hoped that students will begin to understand the grammar concepts and more easily apply them to their own writing to help them better communicate their ideas, add details, and to develop a unique voice.
Framework for Daily Grammar Inclusion Lessons

Note: This framework is a guideline, and not set in stone. For some lessons, the framework has been tweaked for various reasons.

**Monday:** Introduction to the grammar term: looking at examples, matching
**Tuesday:** Unscrambling and/or Imitating: students imitate professional examples by either unscrambling sentence parts that are given to them to imitate the form of the example or by writing their own imitation of the example

- Option for homework: Find the phrase used in a piece of writing (give them a day or two to do this)

**Wednesday:** Imitating (or another appropriate scaffolding exercise)

- Option for homework: imitate another sentence

**Thursday:** Write your own sentence: students practice using the grammar concept in a sentence they craft on their own.

**Friday:** Writing Workshop: students use the grammar concept in their current creative writing piece or revise a piece to include it.

**The framework works well for the following grammar/writing concepts:**

1. Opening Adjectives
2. Delayed Adjectives
3. Appositive Phrases
4. Prepositional Phrases
5. Participial Phrases
6. Absolute Phrases
7. Colon
8. Semicolon
9. Dash
10. Ellipsis
11. Parallel Structure
12. Repetition

**When and How to use this set of openers:**

1. During a short story or novel unit: Students can look through the stories to find examples of the grammar concept being studied. Writing assignments for this week can also require students to use the grammar concept covered.

2. During a writing unit: Some of the days could be combined so that the lesson is not drawn out so much. If that is the case, you might also want to include Daily Sentences, where students practice using the grammar concept in their own writing and combining different grammar concepts within the same sentence, for example, an opening adjective and an appositive phrase in the same sentence.
3. You may want to consider doing recap weeks where you go back over several of the concepts covered in previous weeks and have students writing sentences using more than one concept in the sentence (eg. parallel structure and a colon).

4. Assessing skills: Skills can be assessed gradually throughout the week. You should make a point to walk around and look at a few students’ sentences each day, so that by the end of the week, you have looked at everyone’s writing. You can then check everyone’s work in their Friday writing workshops by having the students highlight and label the sentence in their writing.

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**Week One: Opening Adjectives**

**Objective:** Students will learn why and how to use an opening adjective in their writing.

**Essential Questions:**
1. What is an opening adjective?
2. When should I use an opening adjective?
3. How do I incorporate an opening adjective into my writing?

**ELA 9-10 Common Core Standards:**
- **L.9-10.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  a. Use parallel structure.
  b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
- **W.9-10.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Day One Materials:**
- Opening Adjective Notes handouts: one for each student plus one for yourself (Appendix A)
- Computer with projector
- Document Camera
- Pen and highlighter
- Whiteboard and marker

**Day One Procedures:**
1. Pass out the Opening Adjective handout (Appendix A) to students and ask students to get out a writing utensil and a highlighter.
2. Using a document camera, walk students through “Day One: What is an Opening Adjective and when should I use one?” portion of the handout. As you go over the handout, model annotating the notes for students, voicing important information that needs to be highlighted, underlined, starred, etc. on the handout as you annotate.
If a document camera is not available, the notes could be turned into a presentation, using Powerpoint or Google Slides.

3. Write a sentence with input from the class on the whiteboard. Point out the placement of the comma after the adjective phrase and how the comma helps indicate the pause taken when the sentence is read.

4. In small groups, students will complete the “Day One: Matching” in their tables. Once students finish, facilitate a discussion over their answers, addressing any questions students have and explaining any incorrect answers.

Day Two Materials
- Whiteboard and marker

Day Two Procedures:
1. Instruct students to get out their Opening Adjective packet, a writing utensil, and a highlighter.
2. Review what an opening adjective is and why we use it.
3. Write an example on the board with the classes help before they dive into the day two activities on the handout.
4. Students will complete Steps 1 and 2 of “Day Two: Unscrambling to Imitate.” This could be done individually or in small groups.
   a. Walk around and answer questions and informally assess students as they are working.
5. Once students have finished steps 1 and 2, review the steps with the class, asking for students to volunteer their answers.
6. Students will write their own imitations of the model sentence, step 3, on the handout. Have a few students share their sentences with the class.
   a. If you’d like to assess this step more formally, you may have students write their sentences on a post-it to be turned in or have them turn in their packets (that will need to be handed back for tomorrow). This can be done for any day where students have to write their own sentences.

Day Three Materials:
- None

Day Three Procedures:
1. Instruct students to get out their Opening Adjective packet and a writing utensil.
2. Students will complete “Day Three: Imitating” on the handout.
3. As students are working, walk around to assess students and answer questions.
4. Have a few students share their imitations with the class.
Day Four Materials:
- None

Day Four Procedures:
1. Instruct students to get out their Opening Adjective packet and a writing utensil.
2. Students will complete “Day Four: Write your own sentence” in the handout.
3. Walk around, answering questions and checking sentences.
4. Ask a few students to share their sentences with the class.

Day Five Materials:
- Computers for each student (or tablets)
  - If technology is not available, students can handwrite on paper.

Day Five Procedures:
1. Instruct students to get out their Opening Adjective packet and to get a computer.
2. Explain the day 5 activity: Students will have 15 minutes to work on writing something of their choice--a creative story, a personal narrative, etc. The students will need to include at least one opening adjective in their writing.
   a. A note on assessing the writing: If you use an online learning platform, such as Google Classroom or Schoology, you could have your students submit their writing to an assignment so you can easily access them. To make grading even easier, you could instruct the students to highlight and label their example of adjective phrases so that it can easily be identified and assessed in their writing.

Week 2: AAAWWUBBIS

Objective: Students will learn what AAAWWUBBIS stands for, how to use subordinating conjunctions, how to correctly punctuate them, and how to use them to combine sentences.

Essential Questions:
1. What is an AAAWWUBBIS word?
2. How do I use them correctly?
3. How can they help me combine simple sentences into more complex sentences?

ELA 9-10 Common Core Standards:
L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   a. Use parallel structure.
   b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
W.9-10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Day One Materials:
- AAAWWUBBIS Notes handouts (Appendix B): one for each student plus one for yourself
- Computer with a projector
- Document Camera
- Pen and highlighter
- Whiteboard and marker

Day One Procedures
1. Pass out the AAAWWUBBIS Notes handout (Appendix B) to students and ask students to get out a writing utensil and a highlighter.
2. Using a document camera, walk students through “Day One: How to use AAAWWUBBIS words and when to use them” portion of the assignment. As you go over the handout, model annotating the notes for students, voicing important information that needs to be highlighted, underlined, starred, etc. on the handout as you annotate.
3. Write a sentence together as a class on the whiteboard, pointing out the placement of commas (or the lack of a comma).

Day Two Materials:
- None

Day Two Procedures
1. Instruct students to get out their AAAWWUBBIS Notes packet and a writing utensil. Briefly review what an AAAWWUBBIS is and why we use it.
2. Write an example on the board with the classes help.
3. Students will complete Steps 1 and 2 of “Day Two: Deconstructing AAAWWUBBIS Sentences” either on their own or in small groups.
4. Go over together as a class, asking students to volunteer their answers.

Day Three Materials:
- Whiteboard and marker for each student

Day Three Procedures
1. Instruct students get out their AAAWWUBBIS Notes packet and to get a whiteboard and a marker.
2. Instruct students to combine the first set of sentences in the “Day Three: Combining using AAWWWUBBIS” by using a subordinating conjunction. They should write their sentences on the whiteboards and then show them to you so you can assess and give feedback.
3. Instruct students to repeat the activity with the second group of sentences.

Day Four Procedures
1. Instruct students get out their AAWWWUBBIS Notes packet, a piece of paper, and their independent novels.
   a. If your students do not have independent novels, this activity could be done using any of the texts you use in class.
2. Students will look through their independent novel for three different examples of AAWWWUBBIS sentences and write them on their piece of paper. They will then deconstruct the examples.
3. Have students turn in their work.

Day Five Materials:
- Computers for each student

Day Five Procedures
1. Instruct students to get out their AAWWWUBBIS Notes packet and a computer.
2. Students will look through their creative writing piece they are working on and revise sentences to incorporate AAWWWUBBIS words. They should also double-check their punctuation on any sentences that already use these words.

Week Three: Parallel Structure
Objectives: Students will learn what parallel structure is and how to use it effectively in their writing.

Essential Questions:
1. What is parallel structure?
2. When should I use parallel structure?
3. How do I write a sentence with parallel structure?

ELA 9-10 Common Core Standards:
L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   a. Use parallel structure.
   b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative,
adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

W.9-10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Day One Materials:
- Parallel Structure Notes handouts (Appendix C): one for each student plus one for yourself
- Computer with a projector
- Document Camera
- Pen and highlighter
- Whiteboard and marker

Day One Procedures:
1. Pass out the Parallel Structure Notes handout (Appendix C) to students and ask students to get out a writing utensil and a highlighter.
2. Using a document camera, walk students through “Day One: What is Parallel Structure and Why should I use it?” portion of the assignment. As you go over the handout, model annotating the notes for students, voicing important information that needs to be highlighted, underlined, starred, etc. on the handout as you annotate.
3. In small groups, have students complete the “Day One: Matching” in their tables. Once they have completed the activity, go over their responses, addressing any questions students have and explaining any incorrect answers.

Day Two Materials:
- None

Day Two Procedures
1. Have students get out their Parallel Structure handout and a writing utensil. Students will individually complete “Day Two: Imitating the Twilight Zone.”
2. As students are working, walk around and help them as they figure out what parts of speech go in each blank. Encourage students to share small completions with you so you can track their progress as they work.
3. Students will share with one another and then turn in their handouts to be looked over.

Day Three Materials:
- None

Day Three Procedures
1. Students will imitate a sentence from “Day 1: Matching.”
2. Walk around, answer questions and read over examples as they finish.
3. Once students complete the activity, have them conduct a quick peer review over the sentences, checking for how well they mimicked the style of the original sentence and for parallel structure.

**Day Four Materials**
- None

**Day Four Procedures**
1. Students will complete “Day Four: Write your own example” in the parallel structure handout.
2. Students will write their own original sentence using parallel structure. Circulate and check in on their progress.

**Day Five Materials:**
- Computers for each student

**Day Five Procedures**
1. Students will get out their computers and parallel structure packets. Instruct them to complete the “Day Five: Writing Workshop” instructions in the piece of writing they are currently working on. Students can either go back and revise their writing to include parallel structure or they can add to their writing and use it then.

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**Week Four: Appositive Phrases**

**Objectives:** Students will learn what an appositive phrase is, how to use it, and why they should use it.

**Essential Questions:**
1. What is an appositive phrase?
2. When and how do I use it correctly?
3. Why should I use it?

**ELA 9-10 Common Core Standards:**
- **L.9-10.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  a. Use parallel structure.
  b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative,
adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

W.9-10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Day One Materials:
- Appositive Phrase Notes handouts (Appendix D): one for each student plus one for yourself
- Computer with a projector
- Document Camera
- Pen and highlighter
- Whiteboard and marker

Day One Procedures:
1. Pass out the Appositive Phrase Notes handout (Appendix D) to students and ask students to get out a writing utensil and a highlighter.
2. Using a document camera, walk students through “Day One: What is an Appositive Phrase and when should I use one?” portion of the assignment. As you go over the handout, model annotating the notes for students, voicing important information that needs to be highlighted, underlined, starred, etc. on the handout as you annotate.
3. Write a sentence together as a class on the whiteboard. Make sure to point out the placement of the comma after the appositive phrase and how the comma helps indicate the pause we take when we read the sentence.
4. In small groups, have students complete the “Day One: Matching” in their tables
5. In a class discussion, go over their responses, addressing any questions students have and explaining any incorrect answers.

Day Two Materials:
- Whiteboard and marker

Day Two Procedures
1. Have students get out their Appositive Phrase Notes handout and a writing utensil.
2. Briefly review what an appositive phrase is and why we use it. Write an example on the board with the class’s help.
3. Students will complete Steps 1 and 2 of “Day Two: Unscrambling to Imitate”
4. Review Step 2 as a class.
5. Students will write their own imitations of the model sentence (step 3 ). Walk around monitoring progress and checking students’ work as they finish.
Day Three Materials:
   ● None

Day Three Procedures
   1. Have students get out their Appositive Phrase Notes handout and a writing utensil.
   2. Students will complete “Day Three: Practicing writing Appositive Phrases”
   3. Have students share in their small groups what they came up with. And then have each small group share their top two favorite appositive phrases for each question.

Day Four Materials
   ● None

Day Four Procedures:
   1. Students will complete “Day Four: Write your own sentence” in the handout.
   2. Have students complete a quick peer review, focusing on the correct usage of the appositive phrase.

Day Five Materials:
   ● Computers for each student

Day Five Procedures:
   1. Students will get out their computers and appositive phrase packets. Instruct them to complete the “Day Five: Writing Workshop” instructions in the piece of writing they are currently working on. Students can either go back and revise their writing to include appositive phrase or they can add to their writing and use it then.
Appendix A

Opening Adjective

Day One: What is an Opening Adjective and when should I use one?

Powerless, we witnessed the sacking of our launch.

--Pierre Boulle, Planet of the Apes

What’s an Opening Adjective?
An adjective at the beginning of the sentence.

Forget what an adjective is?
Basically, they modify other words, typically nouns. Here’s a helpful trick. An adjective will fit into the blank of this sentence:

Sam is a ___________ student.

● Good, happy, sad, angry, glad, smart, etc. all fit into this blank. They are all adjectives.
● Does powerless work here?

Notes on Usage:
An opening adjective may be a single word or the first word in an adjective phrase. Sentences may have just one opening adjective or adjective phrase or a series of them.

● Adjective Phrase: begins with an adjective and then continues the description.

Examples:

1. Happy to graduate
2. Sad because her pet died
3. Angry at not getting the job
4. Glad about winning the spelling bee

Opening Adjective Phrase

Numb of all feeling, empty as a shell, still he clung to life, and the hours droned by.

--J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Why use an opening adjective?
It emphasises the adjective because it’s brought to the front of the sentence. When you read an opening adjective, you pause after it, allowing the opening adjective time to sink in.

Bloodthirsty and brutal (pause), the giants brought themselves to the point of extinction by warring amongst themselves during the last century.

--Armstrong Sperry, Call It Courage

Vs.

The bloodthirsty and brutal giants brought themselves to the point of extinction by warring amongst themselves during the last century. (no pause after brutal here)

Comma Rules:
A comma follows an opening adjective or an opening adjective phrase

● Go through the examples above and circle the commas
### Day One: Matching

**Directions:** Match the opening adjective with the sentence it belongs to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. ^, I wanted to run away and be gone from this strange place.</th>
<th>a. Alive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keith Donahue, <em>The Stolen Child</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. ^, I felt behind me, my hand pleading for that rifle.</th>
<th>b. Hot and dusty and over-wearied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodore Waldeck, “Certain, Sudden Death”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. ^, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds, but dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly.</th>
<th>c. Lonesome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. ^, he rocked his own body back and forth, breathing deeply to release the remembered pain.</th>
<th>d. Able to move now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lois Lowry, <em>The Giver</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. ^, he came to our door and eased his heavypack and asked for refreshment, and Deola brought him a pail of water from our spring.</th>
<th>e. Frantic, never turning my head—because the water buffalo had started his charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill and Vera Cleaver, <em>Where the Lilies Bloom</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Day Two: Unscrambling to Imitate

**Directions:**
1. Identify the opening adjective in the model and scrambled list
2. Unscramble the list so that it mimics the structure of the model
3. Write your own original sentence that mimics the model.

**Model Sentence:** Speechless, Bryson scanned the small living room, frantically.

**Scrambled sentence:**
- hopefully
- spotted the soft inviting sofa
- Kendra
- uncomfortable
Rewrite of scrambled sentence:
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight opening adjective or adjective phrase
3. Circle comma after opening adjective

Original Sentence: Must imitate the structure of the model
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight opening adjective or adjective phrase
3. Circle commas

Day Three: Imitating

Directions:
1. Identify the opening adjectives in the models and sample imitations.
2. Write an imitation of the model sentence.

Model Sentence:
Afraid that we might hunt for a cheaper apartment for the next two weeks and find nothing better than this one, we took it.

Sample Imitation:
Happy that we would escape to a lovely beach for the upcoming one month and have nothing but good times, we left home.

Original Sentence: Must imitate the structure of the model
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight opening adjective or adjective phrase
3. Circle comma after opening adjective
## Day Four: Write your own sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening Adjective (Feeling adventurous? Try using more than one opening adjective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Write your sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Highlight opening adjective or adjective phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Circle comma after opening adjective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___________________________________________________________________________________

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening Adjective Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Write your sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Highlight opening adjective or adjective phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Circle comma after opening adjective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

## Day Five: Writing Workshop

Use an opening adjective in your writing at least once. You may revise what you’ve already written to fit this into your writing.

*Handout modified from Killgallon*
**Day One: How to use AAAWWUBBIS words and when to use them**

**What does AAAWWUBBIS stand for?** After, As, Although, When, While, Until, Because, Before, If, Since

**Commas and AAAWWUBBIS**
When an AAAWWUBBIS is a sentence opener, it is typically a “comma causer.” When an AAAWWUBBIS is at the end of the sentence, a comma is not usually needed before it.

Let’s look at this sentence:

As he extinguished his wand, however, he was thinking not of Polyjuice Potion, Puking Pastille, or the navy blue robes of Magical Maintenance; he thought of Gregorovitch the wandmaker, and how long he could hope to remain hidden while Voldemort sought him so determinedly.

---

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

Highlighted in **blue**, we have an AAAWWUBBIS word, *as*, starting the sentence. The clause started by the *as* ends at wand and we pause here when reading. A comma is needed.

Highlighted in **green** is an AAAWWUBBIS word, *while*. Notice when you read the second half of this sentence, starting after the semicolon, that you do not pause before *while*. No comma needed.

**Don’t let your readers hanging.**
*He extinguished his wand* is a complete sentence. However, by adding *as* before *he*, you are providing a reader a promise of more to come: the reader wants to know what happened as Harry extinguished his wand. This promise needs to be fulfilled in the same sentence. All AAAWWUBBIS words leave the reader wanting to know more when they start a sentence.

**Why use AAAWWUBBIS words?**
- They allow you to piece together information easier.
- You can combine sentences with them and transition from one idea to the next.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cause-Effect</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>As</td>
<td>Although</td>
<td>As long as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>Because</td>
<td>Even</td>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During</td>
<td>Since</td>
<td>though</td>
<td>In order to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Though</td>
<td>Unless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until</td>
<td></td>
<td>While</td>
<td>Until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When/when/never</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whatever</td>
<td>Whatever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Activity:**
Pick one word from the list above. Write two sentences: one sentence using the word as an opener, and one sentence using the word directly after the independent clause.
### Day Two: Deconstructing AAWWUBBIS Sentences

**Directions:** Break down the complex sentence so that you are left with three simple sentences.

1. If Rowanne said something important, something he needed to know, he didn’t want to miss it. –Lynne Rae Perkins, *Criss Cross*
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

2. Because his burden of garbage was large and precarious, he could not look down at the path and had to go by the feel of dirt under his sneakers. –Lynne Rae Perkins, *Criss Cross*
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

3. Before he reached the corner, however, he slowed as if a wind had sprung up from nowhere, as if someone had called his name. –Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 

### Day Three: Combining using AAWWUBBIS

**Directions:** Combine each group of sentences so that they create one single sentence, using an AAWWUBBIS word(s) to help combine them.

a. He ate dinner
b. He headed out to see Phil.
c. Phil was at his house.

da. Hector put on his shirt
b. Hector slung the guitar over his shoulder
c. The guitar belonged to Hector
d. Hector was surprised at how well he had turned out.
e. Rowan was surprised at how well he had turned out.

### Day Four: Finding your own examples of AAAWWUBBIS

1. Look through your independent novel and find 3 AAAWWUBBIS sentences.
2. Write them down and deconstruct the sentences (much like we did on day 2)

### Day Five: Writing Workshop

Look back through a paragraph in your creative writing that you’ve completed.
- How can you combine sentences and incorporate AAAWWUBBIS words in the paragraph?
- Already have these words? Double check your punctuation. Did you fulfill the promise you made to your readers by using an AAAWWUBBIS word?
- Did you use an appropriate word that correctly conveys the relationship of ideas in the sentence?

*handout modified from Weaver and Broussard*
Day One: What is Parallel Structure and Why should I use it?

These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five year mission: to explore, strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.

What is Parallel Structure?
Identical grammatical structures that add rhythm and balance to images. These structures give prose a musical quality that adds emphasis and sound to central images.

Why use Parallel Structure?
- For emphasis
- For impact
- To make a point
- To shock
- To fire the imagination
- To inspire
- To rouse to action

Look at this weak rewrite of the example above:

These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. We have a five-year mission. We’re going to explore strange new worlds and look for new life and perhaps new civilizations. We will also go boldly where no one else has gone before.

What is lost by taking out the parallel structure?

Additional Notes
- Sometimes parallel items repeat some of the same words, but not always.
- Commas typically separate parallel items that are said in sequence. Circle the commas in the example at the top of the page.

Activity
Find the examples of parallel structure:

The Twilight Zone

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man’s fears, and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call...THE TWILIGHT ZONE.
# Day One: Matching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The traders were doing good business, ^.</th>
<th>a. dragging their lives, deserting their homes, the years of their childhood, cringing like beaten dogs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eli Wiesel, <em>Night</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They went by, fallen, dragging their packs, ^.</td>
<td>b. his face bright red by now, his neck bulging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Wiesel, <em>Night</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We were no longer allowed to go into restaurants or cafes, ^.</td>
<td>c. to travel on the railway, to attend the synagogue, to go out into the street after six o’clock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Wiesel, <em>Night</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. He would need the touch of a surgeon, ^.</td>
<td>d. the students lived buried in their books, and the children played in the streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Spinelli, <em>Maniac Magee</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Then the music ended, and Jeffrey went right on screaming, ^.</td>
<td>e. the alertness of an owl, the cunning of three foxes, and the foresight of a grand master in chess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Spinelli, <em>Maniac Magee</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Day Two: Imitating the Twilight Zone

**Pick a zone:** Sports, Political, Nature, School, Music, Crime (have another idea? Get it approved).

The ____________ Zone

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as ________ as ________ and as ________ as ________. It is the ________ between ________ and ________, between ________ and ________, and it lies between ________ and ________. It is the ________ of his/her ________. This is the dimension of ________. It is an area which we call...THE __________ ZONE.

# Day Three: Imitating

Pick a sentence from Day 1: Matching and mimic its structure below.

Sentence # from above_____

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

# Day Four: Write your own example
Ideas for including parallel structure in your writing:

1. Series of absolute phrases
2. Series of prepositional phrases
3. Series of subordinating conjunctions (AAA WWUBBIS words)
4. Series of appositive phrases
5. Series of participle phrases
6. Feel free to look at the sentences from day 2 for more ideas!
7. How can you include sensory details to help add details in your writing?

Your Sentence:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

**Day Five: Writing Workshop**

Include one example of parallel structure in the writing you are working on today.

1. Look back over Day One Notes.
2. Why are you using parallel structure? What are you trying to show by using it?

*Handout modified from Killgallon and Noden*
Day One: What is an Appositive Phrase and when should I use one?

_A bald slight man_, he reminded me of a baby bird.
--Tracy Chevalier, _The Girl with a Pearl Earring_

**What’s an Appositive Phrase?**
A noun that further describes another noun.

**Why use an Appositive Phrase?**
- They help you add detail to your writing.
- They help you combine sentences to create more complex, interesting sentences.
- Think of it as a way to add a second image to a noun. In the sentence above, “A bald slight man” provides a second image for he.
- Look at the sentence below. What would be lost without the appositive phrase?

_The dictionary had a picture of an aardvark, a long-tailed, long-eared, burrowing African mammal living off termites caught by sticking out its tongue as an anteater does for ants._
--Malcolm X and Alex Haley, _The Autobiography of Malcolm X_

**Notes on Usage**
- Notice, that an appositive phrase can be taken out of the sentence and you’re left with a complete sentence. Try it with the two sentences above.
- Appositive phrases can be used to easily insert a metaphor into a sentence, as seen in the example below.

_Netflix, a black hole sucking up my freetime, has a power over me that I just don’t understand._
--Mrs. Napierata

- Notice that commas go around appositive phrases. Circle them in the example sentences on this page.
- You can also use more than one appositive phrase in a row, like in the sentence below.

_Most of the town’s natives did their shopping on King Street, the town’s shopping strip, a slice of chain department stores auto dealerships, fast-food restaurants._
--Tracy Kidder, _Home Town_
### Day One: Matching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. There was no one in The Hot Spot store but Mr. Shiftlet and the boy behind the counter, ^.</th>
<th>a. a small room with a large, welcoming fire.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--Flannery O’Connor, “The life you Save May Be Your Own”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once they were in her office, ^, Professor McGonagall motioned to Harry and Hermione to sit down.</td>
<td>b. the young man who worked as mr. Hosokawa’s translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--J.K. Rowling, <em>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In our clenched fists, we held our working cards from the shop, ^.</td>
<td>c. its shadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Gerda Weissmann Klein, “All But My Life”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gen Watanabe, ^, leaned over and spoke the words in Japanese to his employer.</td>
<td>d. those sacred cards that we thought meant security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Ann Patchett, <em>Bel Canto</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A Gray cat, dragging its belly, crept across the lawn, and a black one, ^, trailed after.</td>
<td>e. a pale youth with a greasy rag hung over his shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Katherine Mansfield, “Bliss”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Day Two: Unscrambling and Imitating

**Directions:**
1. Identify the appositive phrase in the model and scrambled list
2. Unscramble the list so that it mimics the structure of the model
3. Write your own original sentence that mimics the model.

**Model Sentence:**
The proprietor, a little gray man with an unkempt mustache and water eyes, leaned on the counter, reading a newspaper.

**Scrambled sentence:**
1. a tall thin blonde
2. walked down the runway
3. with a long mane and long legs
4. the model
5. eyeing the audience.
**Rewrite of scrambled sentence:**
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight appositive phrase
3. Circle commas

---

**Original Sentence:** Must imitate the structure of the model
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight appositive phrase
3. Circle commas

---

**Day Three: Practicing Writing Appositive Phrases**

Directions: For each sentence, come up with possible appositive phrases that could be used. Brownie points for thinking of a good metaphor for an appositive!

1. Lennie, ____________, smiled at the thought of bunnies.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

2. Dory, ____________, followed the shells to her parents.
   a. 
   b. 
   c.
### Day Four: Write Your Own Sentence

#### Appositive Phrase
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight appositive phrase
3. Circle commas around the appositive phrase

Series of Appositive Phrases: Write a sentence using two appositive phrases to describe the same noun.
1. Write your sentence
2. Highlight appositive phrases
3. Circle commas around the appositive phrases

### Day Five: Writing Workshop

Use an appositive phrase in your Friday Creative Writing Story at least once. You may revise what you've already written to fit this into your writing.

*handout modified from Killgallon*
Works Cited


KillGallon, Don. “Sentence Composing: Notes on a New Rhetoric.”


Noden, Harry R. Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as part of the Writing Process.
Heinemann, 2011.


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