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Final MA Portfolio

Kathleen Below
belowk@bgsu.edu

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FINAL MASTER'S PORTFOLIO

Kathleen Below
belowk@bgsu.edu

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

16 November 2018

Professor Lee Nickoson, First Reader
Ms. Kimberly Spallinger, Second Reader

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Narrative

The Business of Teaching

The real things haven't changed. It is still best to be honest and truthful; to make the most of what we have; to be happy with simple pleasures; and have courage when things go wrong.

— Laura Ingalls Wilder

High school English teacher? Surprise expressions instantly appear on the faces of questioning folk who indubitably inquire, “And what do you do?” when in attendance at various social gatherings. I can mentally hear the question: “Why?” According to the various remarks heard over the years by friends and family, the consensus is that teachers who surround themselves with raging hormonal disinterested teenagers must have a death wish or desire a lifeless existence behind a desk. But the expressions quickly transform from shocked surprise to soothing esteem. I regularly receive congratulations for imaginary medals of valor for the service I give to the educational system. In the moment; we laugh; we cajole, together. The attention is heartwarming, but underneath, the truth remains the same. This job, this profession, a high school English teacher, has meaning. At times, this business of teaching circles around an atmosphere of negative publicity including incompetent leaders and ineffective practices. From George W. Bush’s *No Child Left Behind* to Barack Obama’s *Every Student Succeeds Act*, these legislations proved somewhat ineffective as many schools did not show growth as hoped and only succeeded in lowering morale among the ranks of educators. Nevertheless, this business also rallies around an environment of smart, creative thinkers who foster the idea that knowledge is not only power, but contentment. All too often, we are reminded at staff meetings that education is a business. In my mind or under my breath, it is a simply reply: “You are correct, Sir. I am in the education business, the business of teaching.” I declare this statement after

many years of aimless discontent and several unfulfilling career paths. This narrative I share with my students who think that life has to be planned perfectly and with grand precision.

When my students hear that I was born and raised in the Finger Lakes of New York, they inevitably ask, “How did you end up here?” I reply that it is a long story, but a one sentence summary is this: I was wandering an unknown path. The teaching bug had bitten, but not quite stung. In retrospect, I have known my entire life that I wanted to be a teacher and just did not have the guts or confidence to pursue the profession until enough life experience had passed and a little voice inside said, “Embrace the fear, take a risk.” From that point, the path to becoming an English teacher fell into place.

My humble beginnings are rooted in upstate New York in a small village, Weedsport, where there are currently two traffic lights, two gas stations, one supermarket, a Kinney drug store, and a Dunkin Donuts. I attended the local public school district, participated in music and sports, and graduated in the top third of my class. My life was ordinary in every way, much like many of my friends. After graduation, I attended SUNY Brockport where I enrolled as undecided and enjoyed the freedoms of a freshman student where parents did not exist and fun never ended. As a result of my aimless existence, my studies suffered and I soon found myself no longer matriculated at this school. My boyfriend, at the time, had been offered a managerial position with a gasoline company in Ohio and decided to take it. I followed.

Moving to Ohio meant being away from my family and friends, proving that I could be an adult, and making decisions for two people instead of one. One marriage and one divorce later, I remained in Ohio. Living near Kent State University and working fulltime at a Pizza Hut restaurant, I registered to take a few classes. Four years later, I graduated with a BA in English. What could I do with this degree? Not much. I continued working in restaurants feeling that my

efforts had been for nothing. By this time, I had relocated to the Port Clinton area and continuing in the restaurant business. A few years passed and I procured a job working for the county. No more waitressing or bartending; I was now a case manager for a welfare department. Nearly ten years faded into the past and again, I found myself at a crossroads. Something was still missing from my life, a passion that lay dormant that would roll over every now and then and sleepily say, “It’s not too late.” My second marriage bumped along happily, provided emotional stability, and prompted hearty philosophical conversations that included my idea of switching careers. I was ready to face the unknown. Not everyone understood my decision to quit my job as a case manager at the welfare department, but I had the support of my husband and courage under my fingernails. After a few grueling years of school, teaching credentials in hand, my position at Sandusky High School finally became a reality. I have a classroom and a desk to call my own. It is a humble desk and classroom. Is it everything I imagined? Probably not. In my memory, I visualize my mentors, real and imagined sitting at their desks (metaphorically speaking) accomplishing great things such as delivering awe inspiring lectures, offering invaluable feedback on essays, and molding the next round of movers and shakers in the world. Sounds a bit exaggerated, but the gears are spinning wildly in my imagination. In truth, much of a teacher’s job revolves around good organization skills which happen to be my forte. Having excellent communication abilities also are required. The desk and the classroom is where I get to practice my craft. The desk is old and small and the classroom is in need of some repairs—leaky windows, broken floor tiles, and irregular heating system. But it is mine. I have grown used to it and I would not trade it for any other. Now, after ten years, I smile as the memories of yesterday flood my mind. This room has seen mistakes and successes. This room. This building. This district. I am right where I belong and it feels good. In the end, I tell my

students that anything is possible if you set your mind and work hard for what you want. But is that the end?

Previously, I stated that all along I knew that I wanted to be a teacher and never had the pluck or determination to put a plan into action. Several details have purposely been left out of the narrative thus far and now I would like to reveal them. At the age of eleven or twelve, my three-year-old sister, Karen, became my star pupil as I administered lessons of numbers, colors, and alphabet letters throughout my summer vacation. I read to her every night for several years. Two years later, a summer recreation program employed me as a group leader in charge of about a dozen or so third graders. I was responsible for their well-being for about three hours and making sure they arrived to their swim lesson timely. I enjoyed being a leader and the time spent playing basketball, kickball, and shuffleboard with the children. I nearly had forgotten about these memories until my mother reminded me. Lastly, I remember tutoring my friend's grandchildren. Denise casually noted, "Have you thought about being a teacher; you'd make a good one." She did not realize the gravity of her statement until a few years later when I told her that she was the reason that I had the courage to pursue a teaching career. And there you have it. All that I have accomplished and all that I endeavor to fulfill in the classroom began with a comment that created a chain reaction that continues to create energy.

Sandusky High School has provided me several opportunities including teaching AP Literature and Composition, collaborating with the Global Internship Program, and working as an adjunct instructor at Firelands BGSU teaching remedial courses to adults. When BGSU sent out an email looking for teachers to participate in the Falcon Grant and earn credentials to teach the GSW classes in the high school classroom, I could not say no. When I earned my bachelor's degree ten years after high school graduation, the Johnny-come-lately label lurks in my blood.

Teaching credentials arrived at the cusp of middle age. For once in my life, I was able to seize an opportunity that would give me an edge over other teachers and if it did not, then the self-satisfaction that knowledge gives oneself would suffice. Eighteen credits later and BGSU offered a scholarship to complete the last twelve credits to earn a master's degree. Again, I could not say no for the chance to build my content knowledge and to learn/network with my colleagues. At the close of this master's program, the following assignments represent and reflect my best work.

Research Paper—*Grades, Feedback, and Choices: Reevaluating Traditional Methods and Reconsidering What's Best for the Student*

ENG 6200—Teaching of Writing/Spring 2016, Dr. Lee Nickoson

ENG 6040—Graduate Writing/Summer 2017, Dr. Cheryl Hoy

An ongoing debate that I have with myself is about how to grade essays and other writing assignments. What do I grade? How much? Do I provide all the edits? Are these strategies effective for students' progress? Swirling in my conscience, these questions remain like glitter in a snow globe: settling and unsettling and never erasing from my mind. What I have discovered from my teaching experience is that rubrics and correcting my students' work takes up too much time and is not very effective. The results are somewhat similar when I don't use a rubric and give no edits to their papers. How can this be possible? My quest for answers brought about this research paper. Can I leave a paper alone and still be an effective teacher of writing? How do I give effective feedback without spending countless hours grading papers? My research was directed to finding like-minded philosophies and strategies that lean on these opinions.

After reviewing the extensive feedback provided by Dr. Cheryl Hoy, I could discern that my research paper had grammar issues, citation problems, a lack of formalness, and vagueness. Her comments forced me to reexamine how I write papers and encouraged me to put more effort into the revision process. Admittedly, my writing falls from my brain to the paper in choppy chunks and I never spend the time that I should on the revision end. I learned that it is valuable to have another set of eyes review and provide constructive feedback. If I could do the paper over again, I would look to have more current data to support my assessment theories and practice my revision skills. For example, I connect with Dave Stuart, Jr., a Michigan educator who puts out a weekly blog dedicated to discussion topics including assessment. Seeking out a professional association such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) provides current trends in education. Finding a good professional development website provides invaluable resources. Currently, I use Heinemann. Titles are abundant and ordering is easy.

Literary Criticism—*Interaction, Agency, and Presence: The Carousel of Mouse, Rabbit, and Dog in Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men*

ENG 6070—Theories and Methods of Literary Criticism/Summer 2016, Dr. Erin Labbie

Steinbeck's novel has been a favorite of mine to read with students because of its compactness, uncomplicated language, and discussion driven themes. In order to keep *Of Mice and Men* from becoming stale, I am always on the lookout for a fresh perspective to share with students. Dr. Erin Labbie's Literary Criticism class (ENG 6070) required students to explore and discuss literature through a variety of critical lenses including feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, and deconstruction approaches. For Steinbeck's novella, I selected a perspective currently not used in my classroom: literary animal studies.

Again, my writing lacks formality, contains grammar issues, and citation problems noted in the feedback provided by Dr. Erin Labbie. The revision process has positively impacted my writing in that it helps me to expand and clarify my thoughts. Admittedly, my writing faults lie in my ability to effectively convey the ideas swirling in my head onto the paper and I am always in a hurry to get assignments completed. She also advised me to reorganize some of the paragraphs in order to maintain cohesiveness. Pushing myself to revise based on suggested feedback forces me to slow down my thinking and to remember my audience.

Teaching Based Project—*AP Short Fiction Unit/Assignment Plan*

ENG 6090—Teaching of Literature/Spring 2018, Dr. Kim Coates

Teaching AP Literature and Composition demands expert knowledge on novels, plays, poetry, and short stories as well as prepping students for the AP exam, a three hour test consisting of multiple choice questions and three essays. High expectations for student success sit in the front of my mind, and the pressure to produce college ready thinkers is real. With only one year of experience teaching this class, I am attempting to improve my AP knowledge base. With limited resources, using the single available textbook became my starting point. Trying to do too much at once is daunting and most likely ineffective, so my goal is to start slow and reinforce my strengths and work slowly to improve my weaknesses. This short story unit is my first attempt at consistency and structure in the classroom. My first year teaching AP Literature consisted of jumping around in the textbook, utilizing too many resources, and feeling that we did a lot of things but not enough that counted.

The narrative of this teaching unit demanded that I reflect on my pedagogical choices. Constructive comments provided by Dr. Kimberly Coates were the usual errors including grammar mistakes and passages needing clarification. One specific area asked that I might

reconsider my word choice. The AP short story teaching unit is in use at the time of this writing and I would like to note that the schedule was too rigorous for my students, so some additional modifications were rendered: dedicated the informational portion of each chapter to classroom lecture and discussion, lessened the short stories to be read outside of class, read beginnings of stories in class to be finished at home, and lessened lengthy writing assignments to make time for multiple shorter writing assignments.

Teaching Based Project—*Resource Guide for Teaching Technical Writing*

ENG 6470—Teaching Technical Writing/Summer 2018, Dr. Gary Heba

Working at a comprehensive school with a diverse population allows me to be included in conversations with administrators and colleagues that debate which English classes should be available in our course guide. Every year, a functional or technical English class enters the dialogue. Since none of us have taught this type of class, the debate ends quickly. Throughout the year, occasional opportunities arise that allow me to promote a technical writing English class. Our school is comprehensive meaning we have vocational programs embedded into our curriculum and I purposefully advertise to certain administrators. I frequently conference with my colleague, Vicki, in regards to the students in her credit recovery classroom and how they might be better suited in a technical writing class for English credit. She works closely with the career tech administrators, so I am hoping that she is talking with them about some possible changes. I shared my Resource Guide with her and I believe that she appreciates my effort and perseverance. My goal is that someone listens and uses their influence to get this class offered in our school. Taking ENG 6470 with Dr. Gary Heba was the first official stepping stone to acquaint myself with the curriculum of a technical writing class. Our final project, a resource

guide for teachers, was a functional assignment that can be helpful to the new teacher of technical writing.

Very few changes were made to the resource guide as Dr. Gary Heba provided feedback for each separate assignment during the course of the technical writing class. Definitive differences exist between the writing assignments of a standard high school English curriculum and a technical writing course. In a regular English class, students find themselves writing narrative essays, creative writing assignments, compare/contrast essays, and persuasive/position papers all which typically have little or no practical application in the career world. In the technical writing classroom, students practice writing resumes, memorandums, proper email construction, ethical dilemma essays, customer claim/reply letters, brochures, and proposals to name just a few.

As this master's program comes to a close, the business and (busyness) of teaching have not changed. The dubious expressions will continue; this English teacher will rise every morn to ready herself for lessons to be taught and learned at Sandusky High. The one change that makes a difference is knowing I had the support of family and friends who understood when I could not attend activities because I had homework; of instructors who displayed care and offered assistance; of colleagues and fellow teachers/students who shared their experiences and insight; and lastly of John who stood by my side since the day I approached him with the crazy idea that I wanted to quit my job and become a teacher. Wilder's quote reminds me that teaching is more than lessons on the chalkboard, but lessons while standing in a classroom or a hallway. Take pleasure in the good and the bad; we teachers are lucky enough to get another chance when the sun rises tomorrow.

Project 1

Kathleen Below

English 6040

Dr. Cheryl Hoy

16 June 2017

Grades, Feedback, and Choices:

Reevaluating Traditional Methods and Reconsidering What's Best for the Student

feedback *noun* feed·back \ 'fēd-, bak\

: helpful information or criticism that is given to someone to say what can be done to improve a performance, product, etc.

Grading papers. How much is needed? If any? What is it? What is appropriate?

Nearing the close of ten years of teaching high school English, a noticeable change in grading attitudes has revealed itself. When one speaks of grading, one has to discuss lesson planning and types of assessments. A teacher must ask himself or herself, “What are the pedagogical goals that need to be met for the students?” In today’s data driven climate, the ability to provide and show evidence of student growth is required. Simply saying, “Here is how I grade my students!” will not be enough.

My grading philosophy has seen a shift in strategy in the last few years. In the past, I saw myself as a grader of every scrap of paper. Once in a while, I would ‘cheat’ and not grade an assignment. Most everything was graded on my own time; here and there, I might allow the students to do a trade and grade. When it came to essay assignments, I did not assign too many because that would equal no weekend for Kathy. Lugging home this big bag full of ungraded papers, I anticipated all the moments/hours dedicated to providing feedback. Passing back graded papers revealed an ugly truth: Students would look at their grade and immediately asked

if they “needed to keep it?” When I said no, many of the papers were tossed to the trash or found on the floor. What does this mean? All my hard work meant nothing to them; it was all for that recorded grade. As soon as I answered their question, “Is this in ProgressBook yet?” the process was all over. I have been leaning toward this less is more approach to grading for some time. Kelly Gallagher, a recognized high school educator who improved the idea of the weekly current event assignment and renamed it: *Article of the Week*, says that he utilizes thirty to sixty seconds to grade this assignment (Stuart Jr.). *Article of the Week* or AoW, for short, is a published news article that consists of three steps: 1) read the article, 2) annotate the article, and 3) write a 1-2 page reflection of the article. Using Kelly Gallagher’s method of grading *AoW*’s, I spend about thirty seconds on each one. As for essays and other longer writing assignments, I have done the glance over and given credit. My plan is to incorporate revision/portfolio/conferencing into the assessment piece, but for now, shifting this way of thinking is a task in itself. Oftentimes, this scenario takes place: Teacher calls student to his/her desk, student walks slowly, student displays the ‘Why am I in trouble?’ look, teacher assuages student’s fears by explaining that a teacher/student conference is another way to assess an assignment.

Since educator Kelly Gallagher introduced me to Nancie Atwell’s ideas regarding no grading, I took notice. To summarize her thoughts, she more or less has never graded any pieces written by her students. In that case, according to Atwell, my lack of written feedback has not hindered my students in their growth as writers. Is there a better solution to providing feedback? According to the research, the answer is yes. My research took me to plenty of articles that argued against grading and how grading actually has a negative impact on students. These articles led me to alternate approaches to grading including but not limited to portfolio

assessment, conferences, minimal marking, audio comments, and the Collins writing program. More importantly from a pedagogical standpoint, I think the overall attitude is about giving students more choice, control, challenge, and collaboration on writing assignments. When teachers facilitate these practices in the classroom, student motivation and engagement increases. Lastly, students need more writing practice and they desire honest and specific praise.

Literature Review

Feedback—What does appropriate feedback look like?

Bryan Bardine and Molly S. Bardine address the issue of teachers' responses to student writing in their article, *Beyond the Red Pen: Clarifying Our Role in the Response Process*. These issues include the types of feedback/comments given to students and how students react positively or negatively to the feedback received. Bardine and Bardine conduct a study for three reasons—the purpose of seeing "how much attention students paid to the written comments", "if students knew why teachers responded", and also to know "if students understood the comments" (95). From their research, Bardine and Bardine determine that instructors need to take care how comments are distributed as too many negative comments can be a turn off to a student and the point of giving feedback is to show improvement and growth for the next writing assignment. When too many negative comments are given, students tend to shut down and even ignore reading the comments.

Another point that Bardine and Bardine present is how to deliver the comments. Throughout the article, the idea of student/teacher conferences held during the writing process seems to be an effective avenue to deliver feedback. The teacher can begin the conference with questions like "What did you learn from this piece of writing?" or "What do you intend to do in

the next draft?” which forces the student to be drawn into the conversation (95). The conference is seen more like a productive coaching session. Another suggestion was made when there is not enough time to conference for every writing assignment—use what is called a “talk back” where students answer the conference questions on paper when the teacher is unable to meet face to face (98). Lastly, a reflective activity is presented where students indicate what they have learned and what they want to learn (100).

Bardine and Bardine point out the positive aspects about feedback, student/teacher conferencing, and student reflection. Teachers need to be careful how they deliver feedback to their students as it could harm their self-esteem and ruin any chances of improvement for the future (101). I see this as a problem in my own classroom every year. Students enter my classroom with negative affirmations: “I hate writing” and “I can’t write.” Sadly, these fixed mindsets become their reality. Although their skills may be lacking, motivating students to improve their writing is difficult as they believe it is an impossible task. My policy is to always have constructive criticism, but to find something praiseworthy as well. The importance of process over the product is stressed and this somewhat alleviates the pressure of final grades.

Feedback—Less is More

Lisa Lucas’ “Write More, Grade Less: Five Practices for Effectively Grading Writing” provides an overview of the Collins Writing Program, a five part approach to writing that is intended to be effective, efficient, and “allows for differentiated instruction and expectations that enables assignments to be modified to meet varied student ability levels” (136). *Type One* writing is a quick write that is assessed with a check or a check minus (2). *Type Two* writing is also a quick write—the difference is that *Two* is looking for a correct answer; whereas, *One* is just brainstorming (3). *Type Three* and *Type Four* are similar in that they are longer pieces of

writing and demand specific standards which the Collins Writing Program labels as focus correction areas (aka FCAs) (4). *Type Four* differs from *Type Three* as students are required to revise their writing piece, read it out loud, and allow for peers to assist in the editing process (4). The Collins Writing Program states that in order for the focus correction area to be effective, feedback must meet the following criteria: it should be timely, specific, understandable, and students should have the opportunity to revise (5). Lucas employs what she calls “over-the-shoulder grading” for *Type One* through *Four* wherein she walks around the room and quickly gives students a grade for their work (4). *Type Five* is writing that has gone through the revision process and is ready to be published. The Collins Writing Program promotes less grading on papers and more attention given to focus areas.

Lucas exemplifies where feedback is the priority and should be the critical part of teaching, not just the comments given on a final paper being passed back forever. Comments and feedback should be given out during the revision process. The different types of writing spelled out in the Collins Writing Program allows for teachers to concentrate on the needs of the classroom which means using available time effectively and efficiently. In summary, the Collins Writing program that Lucas utilizes and supports says that *Type One* and *Two* activities help students to develop confidence in their writing skills and *Type Three* and *Four* activities help students to improve editing and polishing (4).

Like Lucas, Peter Elbow’s approach to grading is a ‘less is more’ strategy. They also indicate that writing falls into two distinct categories in the classroom—low stakes and high stakes. Low stakes writing includes journal entries, bell ringers, quickwrites, exit tickets, peer reviews, and reflective of exercises, all which require little to no grading. High stakes writing is

putting the low stakes practice to the test generally seen in the form of an essay or other longer pieces of writing (1-13).

When writing an essay with multiple drafts, Elbow suggests that students need to see some feedback at some point during the drafting stage and not necessarily on the final copy because “we are coaching improvement—instead of just writing autopsies on finished products that will never be improved” (5). Three strategies stand out in Elbow’s piece in regards to high stakes writing: (1) responding to dialogue using an informal cover letter for students to answer questions about the assignment; (2) read through the entire essay before giving any type of feedback; and (3) and then write any comments on a separate sheet of paper; this helps deter any chance of playing editor and fixing all the mistakes as one reads along which ends up being very time consuming (12-13).

Elbow’s attitude toward grading seems to be a search for authentic assessment. What is most effective and useful for the student? They do not want teachers wasting time grading every scrap of writing that is completed in and out of the classroom—sometimes the teacher will have to give students participation points to get them motivated. But for high stakes writing, some feedback will be required, but teachers need to use it sparingly, constructively, and feasibly. In other words, Elbow encourages plenty of opportunities for low stakes writing and less emphasis on the high stakes writing. When a high stakes writing piece is assigned, the teacher needs to be mindful that the feedback is positive and constructive (12).

Clyde Moneyhun, belonging to the ‘less is more’ club, emphasizes giving little feedback per draft meaning that the instructor expects more than one revision. The type of feedback and the timing of the feedback are important. In the beginning stages of revision the appropriate feedback should be generalized; as the paper progresses through the revision process, the

feedback can be more specific (328). Asking questions about the writing is also suitable for feedback. Much of the advice given by Moneyhun is based on the premise that students must accept the idea of process over product—that a piece of writing begins to evolve after several drafts. Moneyhun notes that “some students resist this process, especially at the beginning,” but with a little patience notes that he sees a “shift in attitude among enough of the students to convince me that it works” (328).

Moneyhun takes the skill of writing and demonstrates to teachers that process is the only way to get results. Teaching the methods, lecturing, assigning an essay, grading the essay, returning the essay are most likely not the steps one should take to improve the writing skills of students. Taking the time to go through the process with students, giving them formative feedback, and allowing them to revise is a much better solution and will also result with less grading of essays outside the classroom.

Discussion about feedback does not end at high school graduation. In fact, some researchers and theorists continue the debate at the university level. Brian Huot along with Peggy O’Neil and Cindy Moore offer their thoughts in *A Guide to College Writing Assessment* noting sample strategies as well as providing a historical context and a theoretical context. Another organization worth mentioning is the National Council of Teachers of English and the Council of Writing Program Administrators who wanting to assist instructors submitted a white paper on writing assessment with the following basic tenets: “The connections among language, literacy, and writing assessment; the principles of effective writing assessment; the appropriate, fair, and valid use of writing assessment; and the role and importance of reliability in writing assessment” (1).

Assessment Types—Formative

Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher's "A Formative Assessment System for Writing Improvement" stresses the importance of formative assessment over summative assessment. The reasoning behind this statement is the concern for student writing improvement. Teachers should not wait until the final copy is turned in to offer feedback because by then, it is too late. Students will not return to a former essay, study the constructive feedback, and utilize for the next essay assignment. According to Frey and Fisher, it is better to offer the feedback during the drafting stages and to use a rubric for the final copy (67).

Frey and Fisher dismiss the idea that final grades are helpful to students for improving their writing skills. Instead, formative assessments promote growth and progression for students. Formative assessments are not single opportunities to check how students are feeling about a topic; it is a system that is used by the teacher and the student. How can teachers implement their system of improvement? It begins with an error analysis tool that is prescriptive to each class. Once the teacher figures out what each class needs; then formative assessment can be determined.

Many teachers and school districts do not use enough of formative assessment or in an appropriate manner. Frey and Fisher took some effort to explain that formative assessment is a "process, not any particular test" that "takes place during instruction" (67). In order to determine the process, the teacher needs to know which items need to be part of a formative assessment system. One recommendation is implementing an error analysis tool that keeps track of data for all classes taught (68). This strategy would be completed during the time that the teacher would have used for grading essays. Collected data would then be analyzed for classroom instructional plans.

Assessment Types—Holistic

Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle: A Lifetime of Learning about Writing, Reading, and Adolescents* focuses on her best practices, workshop style. An educator for more than forty years and the first recipient of the Global Teacher Prize with an attached prize of one million dollars, states: "I have never graded individual pieces of writing" (300). Can the elimination of grading papers have an adverse or positive effect on student learning? Atwell explains that many variables make it impossible to grade single papers; instead she focuses on a workshop/portfolio approach that also includes student self-evaluation.

"Teaching More by Grading Less (or Differently)" by Jeffrey Schinske and Kimberly Tanner published in *CBE—Life Sciences Education* discusses the history of grading, the purposes of grading, and strategies for changing the way we grade. The history of grading provides background as to how we came to use our current structure of A, B, C, D, and F and also notes that several colleges including Brown University do not use a grade point average system. The purpose for grades is revisited here and echoes the same assumption: grades are not effective motivators for learning, in fact, it "lowers interest in learning and enhances anxiety and extrinsic motivation" (162). Grading on a curve is addressed and all opinions point in the same direction—do not do it because it is not fair and it creates a negative classroom community. Lastly, some suggested strategies for grading are assessing effort and participation instead of solely relying on tests and quizzes. Another strategy is using self-reflection and peer review as part of assessment. One last theory proposed in the conclusion says that teachers who spend a great deal of time grading sacrifice valuable time that should be used on course improvement and professional development (164-165).

Other Strategies—Student Conferences

Michael Stancliff's "Why Student Conferences Are Important" begins by stating "conferencing with students is central to my pedagogy" (366). His chief insight about writing is that is "highly individualized" (366) and therefore, recommends conferencing with students whenever possible including using office hours as well. This may not be suitable for the high school teacher but definitely something to consider. Stancliff states that conferencing also has the positive side effect of creating a togetherness or community in his classes and students appreciate the personal attention they receive. Stancliff also requires peer feedback and states that students often comment that "the experience of reading their peers' writing helps them to think more critically about their own writing" (367).

Other Strategies—Audio Comments

Sara Bauer's "When I Stopped Writing on Their Papers: Accommodating the Needs of Student Writers with Audio Comments" explains how audio comments are more effective and beneficial than written comments when giving feedback on student papers. Several voice applications are available; after recording, she sends an email with the MP3 attachment. Bauer does stress that audio comments are best for working drafts and the comments themselves should offer encouragement and other positive thoughts. Audio comments can be more powerful than written comments in that they include the sound of a voice and more can be said about the paper—margins usually do not have enough room. Bauer also notes that her audio comments are "meant more as suggestions than as corrections" (67) implying that her voice is offering meaningful comments. Bauer emphasizes that this does not ease the work load as far as the traditional form of writing feedback; now it is in audio format. This time, the feedback is significantly 'read', remembered, and like a coupon, redeemed.

Although Bauer contradicts the idea of less is more, this information is relevant. Bauer states that recording comments does not lessen the load: talking is a much quicker task than writing or typing comments. Incorporating this strategy could potentially be effective. For example, one of my instructors did this and I felt more connected and engaged to the audio feedback versus written feedback.

Conclusion

In review, process over product should remain a priority; giving feedback during the writing process is more effective than at the end, and to not get bogged down putting final grades on essays. A classroom should experience a variety of writing techniques that are laid out in the Collins Writing program that Elbow simply calls low stakes writing and high stakes writing. Conferencing with students allows for more dialogue between teacher and student; thus, when the lines of communication are open, higher levels of success may be expected. Other ideas that could be implemented in the classroom are an error analysis tool, a ‘talk back’, and using audio comments to give feedback on essays. Effective strategies exist to help improve student writing without spending countless hours grading. Counterproductive at best, the antiquated routine of taking stacks of papers home to grade takes time away from family, friends, and professional development. Most importantly, a teacher’s life should be their own and not tied to the profession when leaving the building. A teacher’s effectiveness does not teeter on how much work they bring home every night.

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Project 2

Kathleen Below

English 6070

Dr. Erin Labbie

25 June 2016

Interaction, Agency, and Presence: The Carousel of Mouse, Rabbit, and Dog in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

As John Steinbeck's novella, *Of Mice and Men*, opens, the reader is greeted with a nature tableau consisting of the Salinas River, the Gabilan Mountains, leafy sycamore trees, a lizard, rabbits, and a heron. This pastoral picture sets the stage for the tragic account of two men, George and Lennie, who sweat it out working odd jobs at California ranches and farms during the Depression years. The title indicates an animal perspective or persona within the framework of the story and some would guess a mouse or two. Steinbeck's tale contains various animals including rabbits, dogs, and mice that interact with the human characters of the plot.

In the typical high school classroom, *Of Mice and Men* discussions focus on symbolism, dreams, and power. While most dialogues about the text address and surround the characters of George and Lennie, the 'men', any discussion of the 'mice' is somehow related back to the main characters and not much thought is given to the actual animals in the story, and how real animals play a significant role in the narrative. According to Roland Bogards' "Introduction: Cultural and Literary Animal Studies," literary animal studies is a "newly emerging field...sought to provide a contrast to the traditional approach" (155) meaning that former critiques can be reevaluated from this new perspective. Feminist, Donna Haraway and her model of companion species supports this theory of animal studies. In her work, *The Companion Species Manifesto:*

Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness, she summarizes the piece by saying it is “about the implosion of nature and culture in the joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in “significant otherness”” (16). In Steinbeck’s story, *Of Mice and Men*, the interactions between humans and animals reveal truths about human culture. The animals act as agents and cause events to transpire. The title, *Of Mice and Men*, suggests that the novel does not stand alone or survive without the coexistence of animals. From an animal studies literary theory lens, the narrative of George and Lennie and its bleak outcome is enveloped by the presence of animals proving that although diminutive in size and recognition, the mouse, rabbit, and dog provide significant elements to the story.

Interaction

Human and animal interactions can tell us about human culture. How we react or not react to the animals around us says much about a person’s character and their culture. The idea of taking care of rabbits “tending the rabbits” as Lennie says repeatedly throughout the narrative is a source of pride for him. As much as Lennie talks about it, it’s like he has already been feeding, cleaning, and watching over his future rabbits. George has to recall step by step what Lennie’s responsibilities will be when it comes to the rabbits and Lennie joyfully interrupts and finishes for George. These rabbits which have not materialized yet (and unfortunately never do) provide the impetus for Lennie to have hope for his future. Without this dream in his head, there is no reason to be cooperative and hard working. These rabbits are everything to Lennie—it’s like he is holding them in his hand and every day brings him closer to the real thing.

The culture of the Depression era may have been one of economy and necessity as many times animals are not doted upon, given little compassion, and seen as a source of food. In our modern society, animals are seen much differently; they are, like a part of the family and well

cared for with yearly wellness trips to a vet. Steinbeck's story on several occasions presents interactions with humans and animals. The first chapter where George discovers that Lennie is carrying a dead mouse in his pocket angers George so much that he grabs the mouse and throws it far away across the stream into the brush. George reasons with Lennie that carrying this mouse is not a good thing—it probably has disease. George, cold and unfeeling, matter of fact, has this no nonsense approach for his reasons. He sees no good reason to carry this mouse. Lennie's perspective is revealed through his actions toward the mouse. He likes to pet soft things and that is why he is carrying the mouse in his pocket—dead or alive doesn't matter to him. The mouse is dead; he's not sure why George is so upset with him. He is not bothering anyone by petting it while they walk to their destination. Although close in age, the culture of George is different than the culture of Lennie. At this point in the story, the reader can identify that George is the caretaker for Lenny. His actions and dialogue in essence are those of a father or older brother. Lennie's personality is exposed in this portrait of the mouse event—Lennie seems a bit slow in cognitive ability. The reader sees that Lennie displays the emotional maturity of a small child. Now and throughout the story, the reader understands and hopefully sympathizes with George's cantankerous attitude toward Lennie. But the reader also feels for Lennie. Even by modern standards, most people would not walk with a dead mouse in their pocket. Small children and even some adults respond to touching soft things. For example, our society accepts that having a treated piece of rabbit fur, a hanky, or a blanket is comforting, but not a dead animal. This suggests that Lennie does not understand the concept of death as is evident when later in the novel, he encounters the puppies.

Dogs and puppies interact positively and negatively with several of the characters in Steinbeck's tale of two men. Carlson, one of the ranch hands, is complaining to Candy, the old

swamper, about the dog—“God awmighty, that dog stinks. Get him outa here, Candy! I don’t know nothing that stinks as bad as an old dog. You gotta get him out” (Steinbeck 79). Carlson tells Candy, “Why’n’t you shoot him?” (Steinbeck 80) because the dog has no teeth and can hardly walk. Candy is horrified and can’t bring himself to do it. Carlson offers to do the deed and Candy hesitantly agrees to let him. Clearly, he loves the dog, so why would he let Carlson take it out in the backyard and put it out of his misery? Carlson reasons again that the dog is suffering and Candy is not “bein’ kind to him keepin’ him alive” (Steinbeck 81) so he is doing everyone, including the dog, a favor. Bert Cardullo’s “On the Road to Tragedy: Mice, Candy, and Land in *Of Mice and Men*” states that “Candy and his dog are important to the action” (440) and most critics miss the point of their position in the story. He says that oftentimes, there are parallels made between the shooting of the dog to the shooting of Lennie. This is an easy conclusion but Cardullo says the real point is “the shooting of the dog that places Candy in the same position” (440) as the dog. When a person is no longer useful, their self-worth is at risk; one may feel life is not worth living. The Depression era exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and self-loathing as it was an atmosphere of economy. During this time of little to be had, if a person is unable to sustain themselves and is dependent on others for care, then this person or animal is burdensome.

Economic hardships materialize and disappear when Slim does the same thing with the litter of Lulu’s puppies. She has too many puppies to nurse, so Slim’s answer is to drown the runts; a sort of survival of the fittest mentality. These separate conversations between Carlson/Candy and Slim/George are again matter of fact in nature, non-emotional. While some of the characters remain detached and unsympathetic, Candy feels helpless and sad to the fate of

his beloved dog. Sadly, Candy is old, one handed, and not valued. Without his dog, life is not worth living to Candy.

Agency

The poor dead mouse in Lennie's pocket serves as a security blanket for the overgrown childlike character of Lennie who perpetually seems to need someone to take care of him. The mouse is his connection to a familial world and displays his desire to be wanted and secure in the loving arms of a mother/father. The mouse isn't exactly a mother figure but holding onto the mouse while you walk along reveals that you long for something that you don't have and the mouse will suffice until your needs are met—something like a security blanket. Mommy and Daddy leave you alone in your bed and your blanket and/or thumb will give you comfort throughout the night until you wake up and see them again. Soon, the reader discovers that the dead mouse infuriates George who impulsively grabs it and throws it away. Does George really disapprove of the mouse? A dead animal could potentially be a health hazard, but during the Depression Era, there probably was plenty of other ill spreading across the land, so George's annoyance must be routed in the occurrences of the past two weeks or so. George is most likely reliving the prior weeks of hiding from the law when Lennie tore the dress of a girl who then accused him of assault. Taking care of Lennie requires more know how than the regular babysitter. A grown man with mental incapacities is a much larger responsibility than changing a few diapers or warming a bottle. George's frazzled demeanor suggests that he is growing weary taking care of Lennie and maybe he is not sure if he can fulfill the promise to his aunt. The appearance of the mouse is just an added annoyance.

On three occasions the reader bumps into a dog situation. Candy's dog makes a grand entrance and exit. Carlson, a ranch hand, decides that the old thing is stinking up the bunkhouse,

has no teeth, and is pretty much useless. He doesn't give Candy any time to argue with him; in the next minute, Carlson is leading the limping dog out to the back yard where after agonizing seconds, a gunshot is heard. Candy's loyal dog is now gone but the prior presence of the dog and its subsequent demise sets in motion a series of events for the character of Candy. Candy senses his fate may be the same as his dog—he is nearing the end of his life and being one handed, feeling useless as well. When he overhears George and Lennie talking about their dream farm, he can't help wanting to be a part of it—"S'pose I went in with you guys. Tha's three hunderd an' fifty bucks I'd put in. I ain't much good, but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some. How'd that be?" (Steinbeck 105). Losing the dog, has forced him to face his mortality and make the best of his last few years. Candy feels guilty for letting Carlson, a stranger, euthanize his dog. Waldron points out that Candy's guilt is a result of dodging his sense of duty (173). After eavesdropping on George and Lennie's conversation about the dream farm and getting himself invited to be a part of it, Candy feels better about himself and "is able to accept responsibility and acknowledge his unmet duty" (173). The dog has acted as an agent of change for Candy—he regains some confidence and maybe a little feistiness.

Slim's dog Lulu has given birth to a litter of puppies and it becomes quite apparent that Lennie wishes to become the owner of at least one puppy. Lennie's entire demeanor changes when he is around or thinking of animals—he is happy. The thought of owning and taking care of a puppy lights up his face. Lennie's excited. After getting the okay, Lennie tries to sneak it into the bunkhouse, but George reminds him that the puppy still needs its mother. Again, the puppy acts as an agent of change for Lennie—a sense of nurturing blossoms within and his heart is fuller.

Another dog appearance that foreshadows the tragic end is the scene between Lennie and Curley's wife. She discovers Lenny trying to bury his dead puppy in the hay. The two of them begin a conversation each lamenting their situation. Lennie explains about the rabbits and the even mice stating, "I like to pet nice things with my fingers, sof' things" (Steinbeck 156). Curley's wife invites him to touch her hair—this action of Lennie petting her hair is equally dogesque. Lennie gets carried away because he enjoys the silky soft feeling of her hair. The scene progresses swiftly—hair being petted, Lennie too rough, girl upset, and then Lennie is out of control and breaks her neck. Sadly, the act of petting the dog is taken too far and Curley's wife suffers the consequences.

The rabbits are motivating agents especially for Lennie—he wants to hear the story over and over again. He pressures George into retelling it and ends up finishing the story himself. Like a child who wants his favorite bedtime story read every night, Lennie regales himself with the rabbit dream. These rabbits keep Lennie motivated and focused—it is about the only thing that he can remember clearly and explicitly. If Lennie did not have this dream of tending rabbits, his drive, his tenacity may be nonexistent. These rabbits move Lennie's character forward each day into the hope that he will be a caretaker soon. The rabbit conversations are not limited to just Lennie, soon we hear Crooks and Candy discussing them with Lennie. They enjoy hearing the story as well hoping to be a part of the dream in some capacity while Lennie is still the sole ruler of the rabbits.

Presence

The presence of mice in Steinbeck's title proves that they are important in some manner. The title is a verse from a well-known poem, "To A Mouse" by Robert Burns—the theme of which reminds the reader that men and animals are both mortal and the difference between the

two is that man is knowing about his fate and animals are ignorant of it. Burns' poem indicates that men and animals face what life has to offer both joyous and tragic. An analysis of the poem also suggests that men and animals (mice) may lead different paths in life but eventually you will meet up again in the end. For this reason, the presence of mice is necessary—the mice represent all animals in the kingdom. They may walk side by side the men of the world or they might be a spectator crossing paths occasionally—but eventually, everyone arrives at the end of the road. Mouse and man, mice and men, Steinbeck's story relies on the character of the mouse—it is the driving force. This is the theme of the story—Lennie is a mouse who unwittingly comes to a tragic end. Without the mouse parallel and the reference to Burns' poem, the story deflates and becomes less gripping. The mouse definitely defines Lennie and he doesn't even realize it just as Burns states.

The existence of dogs and puppies moves the plot forward on several occasions—the shooting of Candy's dog, Slim's dog, Lulu and how he must drown some of her puppies, Lennie receives a pup, and Curley's wife discovers a dead pup. Candy has owned his dog since it was a baby, so we are able to deduce that they have been together quite a long time. When Carlson makes a snap decision to kill the dog because it is old and sick, Candy is unable to stand up to him and stop the unthinkable. The presence of Candy's dog has made Candy a tolerable and understanding person. Candy has put up with losing his hand in a farm accident and has been allowed to stay on as a swamper with a small pension. The presence of his dog has made life bearable for someone who could be fairly miserable with his circumstances. Instead, he is content to stay on and take care of the bunkhouse and his dog. When the dog is removed from the picture, Candy's attitude completely alters—he is visibly upset and depressed. Clearly, the dog defined Candy's character and the loss of the dog continues to define Candy's personality.

Slim's character is revealed by the presence of the dogs—first with Candy's dog and second with his own dog, Lulu. After Carlson agrees to shoot the old dog, Slim steps into the scene and insists that Carlson also bury it and hands him a shovel. Slim exudes a no nonsense approach to the dogs. If you kill something, then you have to follow through and take care of it in the best way you see fit—for Slim, it was to rid the property of a carcass. They work on a farm; you can't leave dead animals lying about. When Slim's own dog, Lulu, has a litter of puppies, there are too many to feed and not enough food/milk. His solution is to drown some of the puppies so that they don't suffer and die. Louis Owens' "Deadly Kids, Stinking Dogs, and Heroes: The Best Laid Plans in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*" suggests that Lulu could have fed all of her puppies as most mother dogs do, but "Slim was simply practicing a kind of Social Darwinism, assisting natural selection" (326). Some readers may see this as cruel, but Slim's practical approach to life is revealed when he follows through and drowns some of the puppies.

Lennie's nature gravitates toward any animal that he comes into contact—not only the mouse, but also the puppies. When Candy is offered a puppy by Slim, Lennie is in the shadow hoping to get one too. Of course, Slim offers and Lennie accepts. Lennie can't keep his hands off the puppy—sneaking it into the bunkhouse at night and sitting in the barn with Lulu and all her pups. His childlike behavior, his innocence are refreshing to experience—it brings the reader back to a time when you are still naïve about the world and willing to love something freely and liberally. Without the presence of animals, it is difficult to say how Lennie might carry himself. He is best defined by the presence of the rabbits.

Tending the rabbits is repeatedly visualized by Lennie throughout Steinbeck's narrative. George repeats the story and Lennie chimes in with all the details. The plan is verbalized several times and even Crooks and Candy hear the story and want to be a part of this future farm idea.

Lennie's demeanor is shaped by the thoughts that eventually he will get to tend the rabbits—all smiles and happy feelings. Lennie is comforted by the rabbits because they stand for stability and a place to call home. Lennie refuses to address the issue of what the rabbits actually represent on a working self-sufficient farm—a food source. George doesn't mention it and why should he? It will only upset Lennie and he needs to hang onto a little bit of hope for a better life. The rabbit that appears at the end of the story when Lennie has run to hide near the river is a rabbit of a different variety—this rabbit is imagined and anthropomorphic—large and talking. Lennie argues with the rabbit. The end is near and this closing portrait sums up the character of Lennie—afraid and alone. The death of Curley's wife condemns Lennie to a sad, tragic end.

In review, Cary Wolfe's "Human, All Too Human: Animal Studies and the Humanities" gives an appropriate definition of what animal studies aims to do—"trace the many ways in which humans construct and are constructed by animals" (566). A renewed look at Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* through the lens of animal studies reveals that interaction between human and animal characters does occur, animals act as agents in the story, therefore things happen, and their presence is needed. Interactions occur between George, Lennie, and a mouse; Slim and puppies; and Candy, Carlson, and Candy's dog. The mouse acts as an agent in the story because Lennie likes to pet soft things, the dogs and puppies satisfy Lennie and Candy in that they can nurture and take care of the canines. Without animals in the narrative, the story would not make sense, be effective, or whole. Although one could predict otherwise, living mutually and peacefully on a farm, in the city—wherever, is the author's objective as Goldhurst states, "Steinbeck's emphasis...is on the nobility of his characters' attempt to live fraternally.....dedicate themselves to pursuing the elusive grail of fellowship" (135). This fellowship not only pertains to human partnerships but also to human and animal partnerships.

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Here is one lesson plan that I would use with the reading of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*:

Of Mice and Men Critical Lens Writing Assignment



For this assignment, you will be challenged to examine John Steinbeck's novella, *Of Mice and Men*, through a critical lens. Your literary analysis will be in response to one of the following prompts.

Requirements:

MLA Header
2-3 pages, 2x spaced

Authentic Title
At least 5 quotes

1. **Animal Studies:** Animal studies literary critics seek to understand both human-animal relations now and in the past, and to understand animals as beings-in-themselves, separate from our knowledge of them. Because the field is still developing, scholars and others have some freedom to define their own criteria. In this way, you will examine *Of Mice and Men* through an animal studies lens.
2. **Historical:** Historical theory says that you cannot understand a text until you understand the period of history and the culture in which it was written. Historicist Theory examines how a work of literature is influenced by the culture of the time and place where it was written, and how it reflects the values of that culture. In this way, you will examine *Of Mice and Men* through the historical lens.
3. **Feminist:** The feminist lens asks a reader to closely consider gender when analyzing a text. The feminist lens is based on the premise that our society is widely patriarchal and this is reflected in literature. When analyzing a text using the feminist lens you can consider how the women are portrayed and regarded. In this way, you will examine *Of Mice and Men* through the feminist lens.
4. **Marxist:** A Marxist critic may begin such an analysis by showing how an author's text reflects his or her ideology through an examination of the fictional world's characters, settings, society, or any other aspect of the text. The critic may then launch an investigation into the socio economic ideals that the novel portrays. In this way, you will examine *Of Mice and Men* through the Marxist lens.

Project 3

Kathleen Below

ENG 6090

Dr. Coates

2 April 2018

AP Short Fiction Unit and Assignment Plan

Statement of Learning/Performance Objectives

Through the course of this unit, students will review literary elements (plot, character, setting, point of view, symbolism, theme, style, tone, and irony) and improve responsive reading strategies via the short story genre. **Students will be able** to use strategies before, during, and after reading to aid in maximum comprehension that will be useful when taking the AP exam. **Students will be able** to respond in discussions and in writing, using personal, literal, interpretative, and evaluative perspectives to works of short fiction. **Students will be able** to identify and explain the function of essential short story elements (i.e. plot, character, setting, point of view, symbolism, theme, style, tone, and irony). Collectively, reading, discussing, and writing about these short stories will improve students' critical thinking skills, as well as develop a deeper appreciation for literature.

Description of Methods

The classroom activities that will support learning objectives include teacher lectures, whole group discussion, periodic in class assessments and writing assignments, and end of unit assessments. The teacher led lectures will provide contextualization and explanation of literary terms. The classroom discussion will solicit student responses to the readings. To keep students accountable and ensure optimal classroom discussion, a few periodic pop quizzes will appear at

the beginning of class. At the end of the unit, an objective test on literary terms and an essay test will be administered. Students will read all assigned short stories out of class, so that class time will be dedicated to lecture and discussion. To encourage close reading skills, we will periodically practice during class by revisiting portions of text. These visits include rereading the text, annotating the text, and questioning the text. Students will also respond in writing but this will be an out of class assignment as well. Occasionally, some class time will be utilized for timed writing in preparation for the AP exam.

Methods and Teaching Philosophy

By the end of the unit, students should have an improved grasp of reading comprehension and writing skills. These goals will be accomplished through a rigorous reading schedule, routine writing responses, essays, robust class discussions, and informative lectures. When students are given multiple opportunities for practice, it is my experience that students learn best under these conditions. There will be plenty of chances to read, write, and discuss the focus elements of the short stories. Practice and more practice may not lead to perfection but it is a step in the right direction especially if surrounded by supportive and encouraging teachers. Lastly, students have a better chance of success in the classroom when they have multiple opportunities to show mastery.

Assessments—Summative and Formative

Students will be assigned weekly readings that correspond to two focus elements. Each short story ends with two sections of questions: 1) Considerations for Critical Thinking and Writing and 2) Connections to Other Selections. Students must choose two questions to answer and use the CSA paragraph format (Claim, Support, Analysis) with a minimum 250 words. These responses will account for 35 percent of the grade. At the end of the week, students will

be asked to write a 2-3 page essay on their choice of focus element. These essays will account for 35 percent of the grade as well. A rubric is provided for students. At the end of the unit, an objective test over literary terms and an essay test that assesses students' abilities to recognize and utilize short story elements for meaning and understanding. These culminating assessments combined with the periodic 'pop' quiz will account for 30 percent of the grade. As for formative assessments, I use practice AP exam questions. Each student is given a passage and the accompanying multiple choice questions. After attempting to answer by themselves, I conduct what I call a 'Quaker meeting.' Students pair up and discuss their responses with a partner. They are allowed to change their answers. I give them an answer key and we evaluate our responses and discussions that let to our specific choices. My students enjoy talking it out and a few heated discussions have been heard.

Reflection

The organization of this short story unit centers on Michael Meyer's *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* that is used in my AP Literature and Composition class. Rigorous and routine are two words that describe this unit. Not much time will be dedicated to projects and flashy PowerPoints. A few handouts are necessary including a literary term with definitions and examples document. When I notice that some students have not taken very good notes, I pass out this helpful paper. Usually, my AP class is small and can be conducted in a circle discussion format. I will occasionally show a slide, but most notes can be taken from the reading outside of class leaving contact hours dedicated to lecture and discussion.

Discussion is a beast that can be unpredictable at times—quiet/mute, productive, exhilarating, rambling, and illogical—and whatever path it takes, the teacher must be willing and able to ignite, guide, and conclude the conversation. There is something special about entering a

classroom, meeting and greeting a new group of people, and exchanging ideas with said persons. By semester's end, students who have labored with the reading, writing, and especially discussion willingly receive its intrinsic rewards.

Lastly, selecting titles to use in the unit can be challenging. Some thoughts that run through my mind are author gender, author ethnicity, publication dates, story length, and theme. Finding a balance of short stories by women and men, persons of color, modern/old, and most importantly—"is it interesting?" is not an easy task.

Daily Syllabus—Short Fiction Unit

- The date given is the date the reading is due.
- The reading includes the Focus Element chapter as well as the stories for that element.
- Each story has questions related to the Focus Element. Reading questions are to be turned in on the following class day after the reading is due.
- Class time will be devoted to lecturing about the Focus Element and discussing how the particular Focus Element applies to the short stories.
- Objective quizzes on stories are possible on those days.
- Writing assignments are due by 11:30 p.m. on Mondays to my email address and can be taken from either of the assignments for that week.

Required Textbook:

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking, and Writing*. 10th ed., Bedford/St Martins, 2013.

WEEK ONE

Introduction to Fiction (4/2/18)

- Reading Fiction—page 13-30, read, annotate, 1-2 page reflection

Focus on **Plot** and **Structure**

- Plot—page 37-38 (4/4/18)
- *Job History* by Annie Proulx—page 87-91, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/4/18)
- *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner—page 98-105, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/4/18)
- Perspectives on Faulkner—page 106-107, choose 1 question/use CSA (4/4/18)

Focus on **Character**

- Character—page 129-135 (4/6/18)
- *How to Date a Brown girl, Black girl, White girl, or Halfie* by Junot Diaz—page 178-181, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/6/18)
- *Bartleby, the Scrivener* by Herman Melville—page 150-175, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/6/18)
- Perspectives on Melville—page 175-177, choose 1 question/use CSA (4/6/18)

Writing Assignment **A or B** due Monday, April 9, 2018

- Writing Assignment A—In a well written work of fiction, the author carefully structures the **plot** to create a certain effect which enhances the meaning of the story. Write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you explain how the structure of the story helps to enhance the meaning of the story.
- Writing Assignment B—In a well written work of fiction, the meaning of the story often grows out of the fictional society established and how the **characters** are affected by and react to this society. Write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you explain how a character in the story is affected by and reacts to his/her society contributes to the meaning of the story.

WEEK TWO

Focus on **Setting**

- Setting—page 184-186 (4/9/18)
- *Soldier's Home* by Ernest Hemingway—page 186-192, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/9/18)
- *IND AFF* by Fay Weldon—page 205-211, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/9/18)

Focus on **Point of View**—

- Point of View—page 215-220 (4/11/18)
- *The Lady with the Pet Dog* by Anton Chekhov—page 224-236, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/11/18)
- Perspective—page 236-238, choose 1 question/use CSA (4/13/18)
- *The Lady with the Pet Dog* by Joyce Carol Oates—page 238-251, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/13/18)
- Perspective—page 251-253, choose 1 question/use CSA (4/13/18)

Writing Assignment **C or D** due Monday, April 16, 2018

- Writing Assignment C—In a well written work of fiction, external pressure of the **setting** is often the key factor that compels or invites the protagonist into action. Choose one of the stories in this unit and write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you explore the relationship between the external setting and the internal reality of the character and how the relationship enhances the meaning of the story.
- Writing Assignment D—Select any one of the stories we have read at this point and write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you discuss how the author's use of **point of view** helps communicate the meaning of the story. Develop a clear argument to show how the narrator's point of view is essential to the meaning of the story.

WEEK THREE

Focus on **Symbolism**

- Symbolism—page 265-268 (4/16/18)
- *Battle Royal* by Ralph Ellison—page 274-285, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/16/18)
- Perspective—page 285-286, choose 1 question/use CSA (4/18/18)
- *The Paring Knife*—by Michael Oppenheimer—page 289-290, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/18/18)

Focus on **Style, Tone, and Irony**

- Style, Tone, and Irony—page 323-327 (4/20/18)
- *How to Tell a True War Story* by Tim O’Brien—page 340-350, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/20/18)
- *Popular Mechanics* by Raymond Carver—page 327-329, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/20/18)

Writing Assignment **E or F** due Monday, April 23, 2018

- Writing Assignment E—Select a story from these we have read that has a strong central **symbol**. Citing specific moments in the text write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you demonstrate how the symbol helps to communicate the meaning of the story.
- Writing Assignment F—Choose one of the characters from the stories above. Write an essay of approximately 2-3 pages in which you explain how the author’s **language** (diction and figurative language primarily) or use of irony contribute to the meaning of the story.

WEEK FOUR

Focus on **Theme**

- Theme—page 296-299 (4/23/18)
- *Miss Brill* by Katherine Mansfield—page 308-312, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/23/18)
- *Free Fruit for Young Widows* by Nathan Englander—page 312-322, choose 2 questions/use CSA (4/25/18)
- Review for Literary Elements Test (4/25/18)

Objective Test on Literary Elements—Friday, April 27, 2018

Timed Writing—Monday, April 30, 2018

Rubric for Reading Questions	Rubric for Writing Assignments
Each question is worth 5 point. 1 pts. = Answering the question 2 pts. = Thoughtful complete responses written in grammatically correct sentences 2 pts. = Quality textual references CSA= ➤ Claim ➤ Support ➤ Analysis	Each writing assignment is worth 50 points. 5 pts. = Clear, concise introduction including title of story, author, and thesis statement 5 pts. = Thesis statement includes focus element and perspective on element as addressed in prompt 20 pts. = Quality, relevant textual evidence is utilized, correctly documented, and supports argument. 5 pts. = Conclusion is meaningful; essay doesn’t just end 10 pts. = Mechanics, spelling, and grammar are correct 5 pts. = MLA format is correct

Project 4

Resource Guide to Teaching Technical Writing

By Kathy Below

ENG 6470

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Technical Writing Teaching Philosophy

Concept of Learning

Learning begins with the act of listening and observing and ends with the act of practicing and doing. For example, most students will sit patiently listening to a lecture discussing the correct usage of commas. At some point, the student expects to practice the skill either on a worksheet or the computer or interactively on the SmartBoard/chalkboard. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (the difference between what a learner can do by without help and what they can't do) is alive and well in my classroom. Learning takes place when students have had a chance to discover what they know and what they don't know. Learning takes place when they can practice the new material and move up to the next level (scaffold)—this means that they practice and the teacher provides any additional assistance if necessary. Sometimes students need the extra help and sometimes they don't. The material should always be 'just right'—not too easy and not too difficult. From my experience, students working in small groups, collaborating with one another, and using peer-to-peer problem-solving skills produce the best results for learning.

Concept of Teaching

Teaching is similar to the concept of learning—listening, observing, practicing, doing and also reflecting, revisiting, and redoing. A teacher contains knowledge that must be given to the student. I call myself the messenger, but at times, the messenger is learning too. Students look to the teacher for guidance and knowledge. Teachers must live up to this expectation but not so much as to be godlike or arrogant. With each class, you have a new set of students who all have separate personalities and learning styles. The teacher must facilitate how learning will occur for everyone. It is not so easy and it takes time to find your rhythm for each class. Sometimes, the messenger in one class did not have the same effect for another class—the messenger must be able to resolve these issues and impart information/knowledge for each class. Sometimes, the messenger may be learning from the students. Most of the time, teaching is also about facilitation—letting the students work things out for themselves and the teacher is available for validation.

Goals for Students

First, students should learn the purposes of technical writing and communication and how these skills can impact their current and future life. Questions like “Why do they need to have these skills?” and “Will they be useful in the job world?” should be answered by the end of the course. Once acquired, these skills can be the difference of getting or not getting the job in our competitive world market. Students will work to improve their critical thinking skills, writing skills, and problem solving skills. Specifically, students will also practice evaluating, interpreting, editing, and designing. Other topics for consideration that students will learn about are ethics, teamwork, and global issues. Lastly, students will create specific documents including but not limited to letters, resumes, instructions, and reports. All of the concepts and ideas define technical writing and communication and practicing them in the classroom is the first step toward competency.

Implementation of the Philosophy

Knowledge, humor, confidence, and humility is what you see when you enter my classroom. My students will expect me to know the content and expect me to deliver the message so to speak. Sharing my college experiences (past and current) with my students gives my students comfort that I am a sincere English teacher and not just here for the paycheck. Sharing my knowledge base with students establishes a firm foundation for credibility especially when I also include my past mistakes. Humor is always a strategy that works for me—laughing is the best medicine and generally, helps any situation. We are all human and I try not to take myself so serious at times. I have tripped over my words and I am able to recover quickly because I can laugh at myself. This is a teachable moment. Your reaction can be a valuable lesson to your students. Recently a student with some personal family issue had been absent on and off for several days. When he showed up one day, I announced, “We have a new student. His name is Yosef.” Everyone laughed including Joseph. And he likes when I call him ‘Yoseph’ because I told him last year that is how his name is pronounced in Germany. No one can be all knowing, so it is good to accept when you ever find yourself in this situation with a bit of humility—students can be more forgiving when you admit your mistakes. My students ask many questions. I am not afraid to say that I do not have the answer. But I do tell them that I will find out and get back to them. Be confident, but not conceited. No one likes a know-it-all. Learning and being knowledgeable

isn't always acquired with your head in a book, sometimes it requires good old fashioned mistakes.

Professional Growth

Keep learning is the number one goal for myself. Approaching this goal can be accomplished in a number of ways—taking classes, reading, traveling, talking to people, etc. But the idea that you have learned all that there is to know doesn't exist. Never stop thirsting for knowledge. Lastly, I remind myself to relax, forgive, and be present—you only get one life.

Technical Writing/Communication

Students, including myself, need the right tools to be successful in today's modern world of technology. As early as kindergarten, children begin to receive computer training. Learning to use PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Excel, and other computer programs are required and expected skills to display at a job interview. In most career positions, competencies including reading user manuals, writing reports and memos, understanding procedures for governmental agencies are necessary to operate and maintain engagement in the working world. High schools need to transition their course selection guides to include technical writing/communication classes. Schools need to meet the demands of an ever-changing technology; our future graduates depend on teachers to facilitate preparedness and proficiency, model learning, and purposeful intellectual play.

Technical Writing Syllabus



ESSENTIALS

Instructor: Kathy Below
Course: Technical Writing
Room: 255
Phone: (419) 341-7407
Email: kbelow@scs-k12.net

ABOUT THE COURSE

Technical Writing or “Tech Writing” is a semester-long course designed for 12th grade students which studies the skill of practical writing. Most students won’t pursue a career in creative writing or poetry after high school, but almost everyone will need practical writing skills in their careers. This course is intended to help you develop and polish skills necessary to effectively communicate in the professional world and think critically about the technical writing you are presented with there.

The goal of this course is to help you to grow as a writer in ways that will prepare you to meet the demands of the technical writing you will need to do in your studies and ultimately in the workplace. Unfortunately, writing is a performance, and as such, studying and memorizing is not enough to become a proficient writer. Instead, practice is a must. This writing will take many forms. Sometimes it will be working on smaller parts of larger assignments, others it will be working and reflecting on aspects of writing and course readings, and still others it will be writing about something that interests you.

TEXTS

Lannon, John M, and Laura J. Gurak. *Technical Communication*. 13th ed., Pearson, 2014.

Optional, but you should have a good English handbook:

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy I. Sommers. *The Bedford Handbook*. 10th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the purpose of, gather appropriate and accurate information for, and write technical reports for specific audiences (resume, claim letter, instructions assignment, proposal, feasibility report).
- Learn to read for writing strategies (not just content) and to put those strategies to use.
- Analyze for and adapt to the constraints of specific rhetorical situations, including audience and purpose.
- Design and integrate tables, figures and images into documents in a reader-friendly way.
- Learn to strategically orchestrate elements of document design, including font, spacing, images, graphs, and color.
- Refine writing style for clarity, conciseness, coherence, cohesion, and emphasis.
- Participate actively in collaborative assignments.
- Develop abilities to perform peer reviews that are insightful, critical, encouraging, and constructive.
- Learn to assess one's own strengths and weaknesses as a writer and develop strategies for continued growth in your writing.

KEEP A DIGITAL COPY OF ALL YOUR WORK

For all of your daily and larger composing assignments, keep digital copies. You can keep them on a flash drive, but if they are the only copies I highly suggest that you also email them to yourself.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

- **Grammar Exam**--Appendix B “A Quick Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics”
- **Resume and Cover Letter**—Chapter 16 “Resumes and Other Job Search Materials”
- **Memorandum**—Chapter 15 “Workplace Memos and Letters”
- **Email**—Chapter 14 “Email and Text Messages”
- **Ethical Dilemma Essay**—Chapter 4 “Weighing Ethical Issues”
- **Customer Claim Letter and Reply**—Chapter 3 “Persuading Your Audience”
- **Instructional Brochure**—Chapter 12 “Designing Visual Information”
- **Proposal**—Chapter 22 “Proposals”
- **Research Project/Feasibility Analysis**—Appendix A “A Quick Guide to Documentation” and Chapter 7 “Thinking Critically about the Research Process”

PEER FEEDBACK

A component of most writing classes is peer feedback, which requires insightful and thoughtful consideration of one or more of your classmates’ work. Instructions for peer feedback will be provided; I will assign partners/groups. You will be responsible for exchanging your work and responses with your partners/groups.

GRADES

Evaluation will be strict but fair. Criteria used for grading papers/assignments will correspond to criteria used to judge writing on the job. A writer's main goals are to be correct, clear, coherent, and concise.

Correctness: This standard means accuracy in content and conformity to directions and

requirements and to standard, formal English. Avoid errors in sentence construction (for example, fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, dangling/misplaced modifiers, and problems with lack of parallelism and errors of grammar (especially subject/verb agreement and pronoun usage), and mechanics (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation). Writing errors such as these weaken clarity and credibility. Readers judge professional expertise by the quality of writing.

Clarity: Be direct. Pay close attention to the reading audience and adapt communicative purpose, content, organization, and language usage to the readers. Eliminate irrelevancy, poor sense, faulty logic, contradiction, vagueness, absolute generalizations, as well as undeveloped, unsupported ideas. Use vocabulary familiar to the reading audience.

Coherence: Use logic and audience adaptation for overall organization and paragraph structure. Enhance coherence through the use of transitional words and phrases. Achieve good paragraphing sense by using topic sentences. Use no stringy paragraphs.

Conciseness: Use economy of language. Wordiness decreases clarity and readability. Use varied sentence structure for effective readability.

Source Documentation: Whenever you borrow information (direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary), cite the source according to the standard documentation/style guide in your field (or another approved guide such as the MLA or APA formats).

Plagiarism and Cheating: Cite the source of key ideas and surprising ideas, statistics and other facts, and words not your own. Courtesy, honesty, and convention require this approach. If you are unsure, please ask for assistance.

Course grades will be assigned on the following scale: 100-90%=A; 89-80%=B; 79-70%=C; 69-60%=D; 59-0%=F.

5-Day Lesson Plan

English IV Lesson Plan			
Class Period	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 7 th	Designer	Kathy Below
Topic	Resume Writing	Date	7/16/18-7/20/18
Common Core State Standards			
Reading: Literature	No RL Standards applicable to this lesson.		
Reading: Informational	RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.		
Writing	W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		
Speaking & Listening	SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.		
Language	L.11-12.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.		
Learning Targets			
I can...	<p>I can address a question or solve a problem by integrating and evaluating multiple sources of information that are presented in various media.</p> <p>I can produce clear, coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate for eleventh and twelfth grade tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p> <p>I can prepare for a class discussion and participate by referring to my findings during discussion.</p> <p>I can spell correctly.</p>		
The Lesson			
Introduction and Lesson Specifics	Bell Ringer(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grammar Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal/Writing Practice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group Discussion
		<input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	Reading Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Annotation/QVC-PR	<input type="checkbox"/> Spirit Reading
		<input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrase/Summarize	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner Reading/Silent Reading
		<input type="checkbox"/> Episodic Notes/Sensory Notes	<input type="checkbox"/> Snake Reading/Popcorn Reading
		<input type="checkbox"/> Literary Element Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Book on Tape (BOT) Readin:
	Vocabulary Skill	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek/Latin Roots	<input type="checkbox"/> Synonyms/Antonyms
		<input type="checkbox"/> Context Clues	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefixes/Suffixes
	Writing Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Literary Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Expository Essay
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive/Argumentative Essay
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision/ Peer Editing	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Essay
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reflection/ Self Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Resume writing
	Media/ Technology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart Board/White Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Movie/Film:

	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Response System	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Website
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet search	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: https://damngood.com
Strategies/ Activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Group Lecture or Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Assessment
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Group Activity/Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Assessment
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion or Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Timed Writing Assessment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Test/Quiz	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Closure	Homework—Any unfinished class activities can be completed for homework.	

Lesson Specifics (Continued)

Lesson Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Resume Introduction ◦ https://damngood.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/resume-workbook-highschool.pdf ◦ Step 1—Uncover your skills, abilities, and special talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Step 2—Choose a Job Objective ◦ Step 3—Learn the Requirements of that Job ◦ Informational Interviewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Step 4—List your related skills and abilities ◦ Step 5—Write One-liners to demonstrate your related skills and abilities ◦ Action Words to start one-liners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Step 6—List your work history ◦ Step 7—List your education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Step 8—Summarize your key points ◦ Step 9—Assemble your resume ◦ Step 10—Produce a final one-page resume ◦ https://damngood.com

Homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete a Reading Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent Novel study
	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish a Reading Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Study notes/vocabulary
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finish an assignment started in class	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Assessment Evidence

<input type="checkbox"/> Textbook Exercise(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peer Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Assessment/ Discussion Participation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formative Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Project-Based Presentation/Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Summative Assessment (Unit Exam)	<input type="checkbox"/> Timed Writing Assessment (Essay, Open Response)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Technology Assessment (Edmodo quiz, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Writing Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Paper/Documented Essay	<input type="checkbox"/> Standardized Test Practice Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> ACT Practice Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Placement Practice Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Core Practice Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Analytical Reading Log/Dialectical Journal
<input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio Reflection Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Assignment and Rubric

Character Resume Assignment—40 Points

At the beginning of the school year, we spent some time creating resumes in order to utilize them for college applications, scholarships, or obtaining a part-time job. As a bonus, I was able to know a bit more about my students. As we wrap up the first quarter, we are going to practice our resume writing skills again by using one of the characters in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Character choices: Napoleon, Snowball, Boxer, Squealer, Molly, or Benjamin

Learning Objective: Upon completion, students will be able to write a resume showing their character's skills, experiences and education that they can use when applying for a job.

Learning Outcomes

By completing this task students will be able to:

- Understand the nature and purpose of a resume.
- Examine a variety of resumes to determine best layout, content and style.
- Develop and produce a character resume.

Assignment Instructions:

1. Use your copy of [The Resume Workbook](#) to help assist you in this assignment.
2. Choose an *Animal Farm* character: Napoleon, Snowball, Boxer, Squealer, Molly, or Benjamin.
3. Complete the Resume Rough Draft—remember that resumes must include the following: heading, objective statement, work experience, education, and references. Resumes must also include at least two of the following “secondary content”: awards, activities, community service/volunteer work, and special skills.
4. Choose a resume template (two have been provided) or download one of your choosing.
5. Be sure to consult the provided rubric.
6. The resume is due by Friday, July 20, 2018. You may submit it electronically to our Google class or turn in a hard copy.

Resume Rough Draft

Objective

Education

Work experience

Volunteer experience

Awards & certificates

Skills & abilities

Extracurricular activities

Sample #1 - High School Student Resume

STUDENT NAME

1234 Hayes Avenue
 Sandusky, Ohio 44870
 (419) 555-5555 | [firstlastname@email.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@email.com)

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a part-time position while completing high school credit.

EDUCATION

Junior - Anticipated Graduation June 2019

Sandusky High School, Sandusky, OH

Aug 2016 - Present

WORK EXPERIENCE

Child Care Provider

Wee Care, Sandusky, OH

Jun 2016 – Present

- Supervise 4 children under the age of 11 on occasional weekends and during school breaks
- Responsibilities include children's safety, food preparation, play activities and tutoring

Waitress/Server

The Olive Garden, Sandusky OH

Jun 2015 - Dec 2015

- Primary responsibilities included taking orders, explaining menu items, delivering food and beverage orders, and clearing/setting tables
- Provided prompt and courteous service
- Assisted co-workers to improve workflow and customer service

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Youth Volunteer

Back to the Wild, Clyde, OH

Jun 2017 - Present

- Setup and maintain activities for visitors;
- Work with children in the summer camp programs
- Assist with live animal presentations
- Over 200 hours of community service completed to date

Volunteer

Big Brother Big Sister, Sandusky, OH

Oct 2017 - Present

- Responsible for mentoring a youth one-on-one, on a weekly basis
- Assist with homework, play activities, support positive choices and help develop effective communication skills

SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Computer skills include Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Adobe Photoshop

Multicultural Class Activity

The purpose of this activity is to develop sensitivity to multicultural issues in a diverse environment. Over your working lifetime, you will most likely encounter multicultural situations in the workplace. Therefore, it is essential that you become familiar with the basics of multiculturalism as it relates to technical communication.

For this project, you will be comparing Coca-Cola websites. The first website is for a US market and the remaining websites are some foreign counterparts. You may work with a partner to look over the five Coca-Cola websites. Compare and contrast the websites. Create a chart to record your analysis. Here are some potential questions:

- Who is the target audience?
- What is the purpose of the web page? (advertising, promotion, political or religious agenda)
- Why did designers make the choices that they did?
- Major differences? Major similarities?

USA <https://us.coca-cola.com/>

Brazil <https://www.cocacolabrazil.com.br/>

Germany <https://www.cocacola.de/de/home/>

Russia <https://ru.coca-colahellenic.com/en/>

Japan <https://www.cocacola.co.jp/>

Additional Assignments

1—Policy Memo Assignment

In a policy memo, you **lay out a new policy or procedure** that you want your staff to follow. This is a document that gives orders. Always explain the background of the problem and the reasons for the new policy in order to avoid sounding irrational or arbitrary. To avoid bluntness, write it in the form of a thoughtful request.

Directions: Pretend that you are an administrator or supervisor in your field. The staff or patients have complained about a problem, which you have looked into. You have now devised a new policy to solve the problem. Write a memo to the staff, explaining the new policy. Be sure use correct memo formatting.

- In the first paragraph, state the original situation and the problem. Why were people complaining?
- In the second paragraph, lay out the solution. Explain the new policy. Be specific about what the new policy is now requiring the staff to do or not do.
- In the third paragraph, thank your staff for their cooperation. Give contact info for the person they should contact about any questions or concerns, either you or someone else. This includes a phone number and/or email address.

2—Business Letter Assignment

A letter of adjustment is written by a supervisor in response to an upset patient who has written a letter complaining about poor care that they received. Your letter should address the problem with the patient's care and provide a timely, fair, and fitting solution.

Directions: Write a letter of adjustment in response to a letter of complaint. Use the block letter format.

In your letter, you should:

- In the intro, express an understanding of the exact nature of the problem in detail. Explain what you have done to get to the bottom of the problem (i.e. spoken to staff members).
- In the body paragraph(s), explain the probable flaw that may have resulted in the problem with the care given (i.e. human or mechanical error).
- State what you have done to fix the situation.
- Mention your regret at the anguish it caused the complainant.
- Explain how you will try to make the patient happy.
- In the conclusion, give your contact info in case they have any questions.
- Don't forget to "sign" your letter by using a cursive font.

3—The Proposal Assignment

The proposal begins the project that we will work on until the end of the semester. Choose your project carefully. It should be one associated with your future career, because you will need to have extensive familiarity with the field in order to isolate a plausible problem and know the concrete implications of solving it.

All proposal writers begin by asking, “What is the problem?” and “How can I solve it?” This project is going to require you to do research to fully explore all aspects of your issue, examine the benefits and drawbacks of various solutions, and ultimately recommend one solution.

Your Task:

You will conduct research and explore current medical journals to learn about innovations in your field. You will then write a proposal persuading Upstate Hospital to adopt a new procedure or piece of equipment that would benefit patients and/or staff. In your proposal, you must convince the reader that the need for a change exists and prove that your solution would be the most beneficial. You will produce a written report and give an oral presentation on the information.

Requirements:

- Write a **4-5 page** long report, single-spaced, with 12-pt font.
- Divide the text into at least 6 separate sections, using headings.
- Include 3-5 visuals.
- Use **at least 4** sources.
- Cite all sources correctly using **APA** format.

Your proposal must include the following components:

1. **Title Page:** includes the title of the report, the name of whoever prepared the report, the names of whoever requested it, the name of the company or organization involved, and the date.
2. **Abstract:** a brief synopsis that captures the essence of the report, including its final recommendations and conclusion. It assists those who may not have time to read the entire report, but need to know what it says (1 paragraph).
3. **Table of Contents and List of Illustrations:** Table of Contents clearly identifies each section of the report, with its title and the page on which it appears. Only include the text of the report. List of Illustrations includes a list of tables, graphs, charts, and all other visuals appearing in the report. Includes the number and title of each and their page numbers.

4. **Text:** the text of the report, divided into sections, each with headings and subheadings (4-6 pages).
 - A. Introduction - a narrative telling the story of the need for what you are proposing.
 - B. Goals and Objectives – Your goal is the specific thing that you are proposing that you want implemented. Your objectives (include at least 2) are benefits that will be seen if your proposal is implemented.
 - C. Proposed Tasks – detailed description of each step that must be accomplished to implement your proposal.
 - D. Schedule - outlines the time frame for each task.
 - E. Budget – In a table, explains all costs that will be incurred in carrying out your proposal.
 - F. Conclusion - highlight possible changes and benefits if your proposal is approved.
5. **Visuals:** visuals need to be integrated into the text. You must refer to each visual in the text (i.e. “as shown in Figure 5.”), and every visual must be properly numbered and titled, with its source identified.
6. **Citations:** all research must be properly cited in APA format, both in the text with in-text citations, and at the end of the report, on a Reference page.

Proposal Required Sections

1. **Title Page** – includes title, author (you), supervisor, name of organization, date
2. **Abstract** – summary of proposal, including findings and recommendations.
3. **Table of Contents and List of Illustrations**
4. **Text**
 - A. **Introduction** – a narrative telling the story of the need for what you are proposing.
 - What do you see that is lacking, ineffective, out-dated, etc?
 - What is happening or what will happen because of these negatives?
 - Why is it important that things be changed?
 - What do you see as a solution?
 - How will this help the situation?
 - B. **Goal and Objectives**
 - 1 goal (what exactly are you proposing?)
 - 2-3 objectives (specific, measurable changes. What are the benefits of implementing your proposal?)
 - C. **Proposed Tasks** – Lay this out in a very detailed manner.
 - How are you going to go about what you are proposing?
 - What will be the logical steps in carrying your proposal out?
 - How will you assess your trial/pilot/plan to see if it is working?
 - When do you plan to evaluate your pilot/trial/plan?
 - Where do you see things going after this first stage?
 - Include ordering and delivery of materials, setup, training, evaluation of changes, etc.
 - D. **Schedule** - Outline the time frame for your Proposed Tasks. By what specific dates do you plan to accomplish each of your proposed tasks?
 - E. **Budget (in a table)**
 - What will be the costs incurred in carrying out your proposal if it is approved?
 - Think about all the possible expenses related to time, materials, people, paper, etc.
 - F. **Conclusion** – highlights the importance of your plan and summarizes the possible changes and benefits if your proposal is approved.
5. **Reference Page**

4—Extended Definition Paper Assignment

An extended definition is a detailed explanation of an object, process, or idea. It explains how something works, what it is used for, and its strengths and limitations. The following techniques are often used: graphics, examples, partition, principle of operation, comparison and contrast, negation, and etymology.

Directions: You will write an extended definition of a health-related term. Your audience is someone who is not a healthcare professional, such as a patient and/or a patient's family member who is unfamiliar with the term you are discussing.

In Your Paper:

- Begin with letter formatting.
- The paper must be **2 pages**, single-spaced.
- You must use **at least 3** of the definition techniques discussed in the class notes in your definition.
- You must include **at least 2 visuals** in your paper.
- All visuals must be numbered, titled, and cited. They must be referred to in the text (i.e. "See Fig. 3.").
- Include in-text citations and a reference page if you used outside sources in your paper. Use the [Knightcite](#) website to help you with your reference citations.

Consider the following questions as you write the paper:

- What is the particular object, process or procedure?
- Why do patients/doctors need/use this? How will it be used?
- What will be necessary prior to using the object, or performing the process or procedure? Consider both the patient and the doctors/nurses/technicians.
- What is the actual process of using the object or undertaking the process or procedure (what will be happening)?
- What are cautions and concerns the patient may need to know?
- What are possible risks? What are some typical complications?
- What is the expected outcome of using the object or performing the process or procedure?
- What should the patient do if s/he has questions?

Extended Definition PowerPoint Presentation Assignment

Directions: Pretend that you have to give a **5 minute** oral presentation of the information in your extended definition paper (you don't actually have to present it). Your audience is a patient and/or a patient's family member who is unfamiliar with the term you are discussing. You will create a **5-8 slide** PowerPoint presentation of the information. You may create a Prezi instead, at www.prezi.com. Submit a copy of your presentation on BlackBoard.

In Your PowerPoint:

- You should have an intro, body, and conclusion.
 - In your intro, introduce yourself and explain what you will be discussing.
 - Give the definition of your term in the body slides.
 - In your conclusion, summarize your information, thank the audience for listening, and ask for questions.
- Do not include all of your information on your slides. Use the rule of 5 – no more than five bullet points with 5 words in each, on each slide. In a presentation, you do not want to stand and read your slides to the audience. This will put them to sleep.
- Instead:
 - Provide an outline of your main points to your audience; this will allow them to follow along.
 - Include **at least 2 visuals** to let your audience picture what you're saying.
 - Be careful of using too many colors, font styles, sounds or animation. While a little variety will create visual interest, less is definitely more.

5—Brochure Assignment

Directions: Use a Microsoft Word or PowerPoint template to create a tri-fold brochure for a hospital, clinic or medical organization. Brochures are used to convey information or to promote something, such as a company or an event. Because a brochure creates a potential customer's first impression of a business, it's very important that the brochure projects a professional image.

Options:

- Try to attract new customers by describing the services of the organization.
- Inform the public about a medical issue, including symptoms and treatments.
- Advertise a charitable event, such as a walk/run or a blood drive.

Front:

The front panel of a brochure serves as its cover and will be seen first. It needs to feature an attention-getting visual and should prominently identify the subject or organization. It may contain a logo or a slogan, but nothing more.

Middle:

Inside the brochure, the reader should find all relevant information presented in an easily digestible format. It's important to remember who will be reading it and what you're attempting to accomplish. Who is your target audience? Write the brochure to these people.

Don't overload the brochure with unnecessary information that competes with – and obscures – what should be the main points. Design each panel as if it were a mini-flyer, using text and visuals in a manner that facilitates easy reading and comprehension. Don't overcrowd panels. Use white space to ensure that it's easy to read. Use only 1 or 2 different fonts, and use centering, bold print, underlining and/or bulleted lists to help your readers understand your main points.

You must include textual information on **all 4** of the middle panels, and should include a minimum of **2 visuals**.

Back:

The back panel will be left blank except for the contact information for your company or organization. It may also include the company logo or slogan.

Additional Resources

- 1) [Writing that Works.pdf](#) by Dr. Steven M. Gerson

- 2) [Resources For Science and Technical Writers](#)
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

- 3) [Technical Writing Toolbox](#) Gurpreet Singh's blog on
Technical Writing

- 4) [40 Technical Writing Books](#) Tom Johnson's list of 40
foundational books for technical writing

- 5) [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) Purdue Online Writing
Lab provides resources for technical writers