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Final Master's Portfolio

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Final Master’s Portfolio

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in English Teaching

July 26, 2021

Dr. Erin Labbie, First Reader
Dr. Lee Nickoson, Second Reader
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Analytical Narrative

I suppose it started with uncertainty. An undergraduate history major with student-teaching experience in economics and psychology, the first time I entered an English classroom as a teacher was my first day on the job. Lacking the educational background of my peers, I worried about my teaching. Was I facilitating literary discussions effectively? Was I grading student writing fairly? As I became more established as an English teacher, and as I laid to rest any notions of returning to history, I knew I wanted to pursue a master’s degree in English to bolster my command of the subject matter. I knew I wanted to experience as a student what I hoped to facilitate more engagingly as a teacher.

In the nine years since I first stepped into an English classroom, I’ve realized there’s something exhilarating, if daunting, about teaching high school English. While history curriculums are grounded in discrete facts, English curriculums are not. The emphasis on abstract, transferrable standards (i.e. citing evidence from text to support a claim, evaluating author word choice, etc.) provides educators with a dizzying amount of choice regarding how to teach and assess these skills. Where history progresses chronologically, the teacher moving from a discussion of the Civil War to an explanation of Reconstruction, English is bound by no such order. While I might choose to teach a British Literature course chronologically, I might just as easily organize it thematically—in which case, I determine the themes, texts and assignments, to say the nothing of the order in which these activities occur.

Given the permutations these choices invariably imply, there is considerable confusion about the proper purpose and methods of English instruction. Administrators debate revision policies. Colleagues disagree over best practices in grading and pedagogy. Students wonder
why they must take four classes devoted to a language they already speak. While difficult to understand and labor-intensive to plan, I relish the challenge of adapting abstract English standards into accessible instructional activities. I am a teacher who genuinely enjoys planning.

To get lost in the weeds of an author’s word choice, to confront the intellectual complexity of a counterargument, to unpack the implications of a thesis—these are the moments that fill my day with purpose, meaning, and joy. While insecurity may have enrolled me in a master’s program, passion helped me finish the degree. At Bowling Green, I have found a community of professors and students who share my enthusiasm for making the abstract more accessible and engaging. When considering which projects to revise for this portfolio, therefore, a common theme emerged. The projects I felt most passionate about, and the ones which required the most revision, were the assignments that directly connected theory with practice—that applied what I had learned in a course to what I would teach in my classroom. In this portfolio, I have selected and revised four projects: three are pedagogical in nature, while the fourth reflects my efforts at substantive research.

The first project in this portfolio, entitled “Reading’s Hidden Relevancy: Putting Literary Theory in Conversation with Textual Curricula,” was designed for Dr. Labbie’s ENG 6070 Literary Theory course. In this assignment, I draw connections between Aldous Huxley’s essay “Words and Behavior” and the writing of Fredrich Nietzsche, J.L. Austin, and Roland Barthes. I argue that facilitating discussions about the subjectivity of diction, about the performative nature of language, and about the role of readers in constructing textual meaning would benefit a teacher’s instruction of Huxley’s essay. The original project also adapted these principles in a lesson plan designed for high school sophomores.
When revisiting this project, I noticed a trend that would recur in future projects as well: a lack of organizational focus. The assignment had two main components: a theoretical justification linking theory with curriculum and an accompanying lesson plan adapting the former into the latter. In the original theoretical justification, I employed a more inductive organizational approach, drawing parallels between literary principles and curriculum without regard to order or clarity. While this approach helped me understand the connections between theory and text, it was less effective in communicating these points to others. As such, this organizational structure limited the project’s overall effectiveness. Consequently, my revisions employed a more systematic and deductive organizational framework. By reordering and rewriting sections of the project, I first explained the relevant theorists and their principles before putting them in conversation with the curricular text. This revised organizational structure more effectively communicated how these scholars fit with the high school curriculum.

If my revisions more clearly show how literary principles align with a high school curriculum, then so too do they more clearly explain why these connections should be made. In the original draft, I argued that the lesson plan would change how students approach reading, reimagining the activity from a passive identification of what was said to an active analysis of how an author said it. This shift in thinking, I argued, would help students see the purpose of English class as an exercise in critical thinking. While I have kept these important albeit lofty ideals, I have also identified the specific state standards that the unit plan addresses. Additionally, I have expanded the instructional activities from a single 90-minute lesson to three 90-minute lessons, adding a Socratic Seminar and revising the summative essay prompt to
better teach and assess how students put literary principles in conversation with studied texts. These revisions address and improve the organizational structure, pedagogical applicability, and educational experiences of the project.

While my first project adapts literary principles for high school sophomores, the second essay in this portfolio facilitates reflective writing practices for seniors. Entitled “Building Analytical Frameworks: Toward a Reflective Dual Enrollment English Course,” the project was produced for Dr. Hoy’s ENG 6800: Reflective Writing course. Per my completion of this program, I will be qualified to teach dual-enrollment English, a class that offers seniors both high school and college credit. Having never taught this course before, the project helped me implement reflective writing practices to promote the transfer of course objectives from one context to the next. Like the first project designed for sophomores, this assignment includes two parts: a research-based analysis of reflective writing practices and an accompanying unit plan incorporating these practices.

As in the previous project, I have revised the organizational structure of the theoretical justification to make it more deductive. In the original project, my research on reflection and transfer is interrupted by an explanation of the educational context in which I teach. When revising, I reordered the theoretical justification, discussing the benefits and challenges of reflective writing before considering the educational context, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods utilized in the subsequent unit plan. This provided a clearer, more linear explanation of how my unit plan reflects best practices in educational research.

Pedagogically, I have revised some activities in the project’s unit plan, providing more specific questions in the unit’s reflective cover letter to help students identify the latent skills of
analysis taught and assessed during the unit. Yet perhaps the most significant revisions I made to this project were personal, not professional. When writing in graduate school, I have often struggled to replicate the formal tone of academic writing. The son of a newspaper editor, I have internalized my father’s journalistic writing style. Em dashes and parenthetical asides occur with great frequency in my work, and my natural authorial voice is decidedly casual. To this end, I am immensely grateful to Dr. Hoy for showing me how to avoid contractions and how to use commas to make my commentary a nonessential clause within the sentence. Although my word choice and syntax revisions occur mostly in the theoretical justification, these revisions will benefit my instruction as well, especially when teaching my dual enrollment seniors how to maintain a formal academic tone when writing. These changes, coupled with the organizational and pedagogical revisions, have greatly benefitted this project.

Echoing the established theme of this portfolio, the third project likewise adapts an abstract analytical framework to a specific teaching context. Entitled “From Historical Europe to Contemporary America: Teaching *Daisy Miller* to Sophomores,” it was produced for Dr. Pal Lapinski’s ENG 6090: Teaching Literature course. The original project included a five-lesson unit plan for teaching Henry James’ novella *Daisy Miller* through a semiotic lens. While the reading strategies and class discussions primarily address the historical context of the story, the unit’s summative essay provides differentiated assessment, allowing students to apply the analytical strategies learned while reading the novella to a cultural object or practice of their choosing. The project also includes a research-based justification for the pedagogical decisions made in the unit plan.
When revisiting the research-based justification for the unit, I detected a gap in my pedagogical efforts. While the choices behind vocabulary assessment and reading strategies were intentional and research-based, the summative essay was not. That is, while the prompt was supported by research, the actual teaching of the essay—the unit’s instructional scaffolding—was underdeveloped. The original unit plan made only vague references to a peer-editing session which would occur at some future date. When considering why this omission was made, I was forced to confront the difficulties I have sometimes experienced when facilitating peer-editing conferences.

Consequently, I began my revision of this project by researching effective peer-editing strategies. In an article by Megan Moser, I found my concerns about peer-editing echoed in others, namely the tendency to focus on surface-level grammatical errors at the expense of ideas and content. In an article by Nelson and Schunn, I learned what makes for effective peer feedback: specificity about an issue and suggestions for its improvement. In an article by Valerie Marsh, I read about why peer-feedback fails to provide specificity and suggestions, and I learned how students’ privileging of teacher feedback casts a latent skepticism toward peer commentary. The results of this research, which were included and cited in my pedagogical justification, produced a sixth 90-minute lesson facilitating peer-editing conferences among students. I am especially proud of how the lesson privileges student feedback by grounding peer-editing sessions in a teacher-made rubric. This effort follows the advice of Nelson and Schunn while addressing the concern raised by Marsh. In this way, my revisions address the original project’s gap in research and scaffolding.
Besides researching effective peer-editing strategies and developing a sixth lesson plan in the unit, I made additional changes that address other weaknesses in the original assignment. As in previous projects, I had neglected to anchor my unit’s instructional activities in specific state standards. In my revisions, therefore, I have identified the specific standards assessed by the unit, and I have also revised several of my lesson objectives for greater measurability. Not only do these revisions more effectively scaffold the unit’s final summative essay, but they will undoubtedly benefit future efforts to facilitate effective-peer editing conferences in class. Consequently, my revisions address far more than a gap in research. Rather, these revisions address a gap in my teaching, a point which addresses the original purpose of my pursuing this master’s program.

While still pedagogical in nature, the fourth and final project reflects my efforts at substantive academic research. In the fall of 2018, I opened my school’s first ever student-staffed writing center. As a new director, I faced a host of challenges involving recruitment, training, and advertising. After the first quarter of operation, however, I was confronted with a new dilemma: how do I assess the effectiveness of my institution’s tutoring sessions? My attempts to answer this question yielded the final project in this portfolio. Entitled “An Imperfect, if Necessary, Start: Efforts to Define and Measure Effectiveness in High School Writing Tutorials,” it was composed for the ENG 6040 Graduate Writing course. The project conducts a review of writing center scholarship, identifying an important gap with respect to effective institutional assessment. To address this gap, the assignment proposes a qualitative study where tutors assess the measurability of constructed objectives in writing conferences.
The proposal calls for future research to determine tutorial effectiveness by assessing progress toward meeting the stated objective.

In the original project, I wanted to emphasize the gap in writing center scholarship with respect to assessment. Consequently, I criticized existing research for not addressing this concern. This was an error in judgment, revealing my unfamiliarity with the academic expectations of a literature review. Addressing Professor Spallinger’s commentary, my revisions remove this criticism, allowing the project to identify a gap without criticizing its existence.

Later in the literature review, I incorporated additional research explaining why client exit-surveys are problematic for institutional assessment. This more clearly described why alternative assessment methods, such as the one proposed in this project, were necessary. I also reorganized the research proposal section, first explaining the educational context before describing the proposed methods of research. This improved the project’s organization, allowing section three (the research proposal) to transition more naturally into section four (the discussion).

As this was a research proposal, the purpose of the discussion section was to explain the expected benefits of this project. In my original draft, I did not adequately explain the ancillary benefits of measurable objectives. In my revisions, I explained how constructing objectives would leverage limited time and promote transfer by naming the specific writing skills being discussed. Regarding the latter benefit, I incorporated the research about reflection and transfer from my reflective writing project.

Most importantly, I better articulated how constructing objectives would help ELL students. To this end, I explained how the questions and dialogue needed to construct an
objective would help tutors learn more about their tutees—their attitudes toward, and feelings about, writing. I also explained how the emphasis on measurability shifts a tutor’s focus from what is discussed to how that topic is assessed. This shift, I argued, was essential to making writing center pedagogy more inclusive. Instead of focusing exclusively on higher-order concerns, tutors could feel comfortable discussing grammar or diction so long as the objective was measurable. This explanation was crucial in connecting my research proposal to an earlier point in the project’s literature review, where I identified tensions between tutor training and client expectations. In making these changes, I have improved more than a research proposal. In effect, I have improved the quality of training I provide my tutors, which in turn improves the quality of tutoring they provide our students.

I began this narrative by admitting a certain insecurity. Lacking an undergraduate degree in English, I worried if I was teaching the subject as effectively as possible. Reflecting on these four projects and their revisions, I can see how my coursework directly addresses these concerns. In drawing connections between literary scholars and curricular texts, I found new and engaging ways to promote analytical thinking and foster meaningful discussions with my students. In researching reflective writing practices, I found better strategies for promoting a transfer of skills from one context to the next. In studying effective peer-editing techniques, I found better ways for scaffolding writing assignments. In revising a research proposal, I found a better way to address gaps in accountability and inclusivity within my student-staffed writing center.

Contrary to the degree’s title, these efforts do not make me a master at teaching English. Teaching is not a static quality to master but a dynamic skill to continually refine. To
borrow from the title of my research proposal, this degree represents an imperfect, if necessary, start toward growing my educational practices. The knowledge I have acquired from this program (i.e. methods of research, expectations of academic writing, best practices in pedagogy, etc.) will be invaluable as I continue to grow and improve my teaching.
I. Introduction

It is perhaps the most common question students ask their teachers. Perhaps it is the most frustrating one as well. Despite its familiar and exasperating nature, the oft-asked query when am I ever going to use this? has certainly perplexed educators. There is a latent criticism embedded in this question, a subtle sharpness that is as hurtful as it is accurate. No doubt part of the sting comes from the teacher’s recognition that it is a valid question--one worthy of being asked. Why teach the Pythagorean theorem when you could show students how to pay their taxes? Why discuss the Punic Wars when you could teach youngsters how to change a flat tire?

As a high school English teacher, students have posed this question to me countless times. I have always thought this inquiry transcended the specific lesson at hand, that it cast doubt on the very purpose of English as an academic discipline. After all, students contend, we already speak English. As detached from reality as the Pythagorean theorem and the Punic Wars are, at least these things are real. Who cares about Macbeth’s motivations for killing Duncan? Why should I debate whether Gatsby actually loved Daisy? These are just made-up stories, are they not?
The answers to such questions are as lengthy as they are complex. Consequently, this essay does not offer a definitive justification for the teaching of high school English. More narrowly, this project draws connections between Aldous Huxley’s essay “Words and Behavior” and the writing of J.L. Austin, Roland Barthes, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Huxley’s commentary on warfare provides a suitable context for students to engage with Nietzsche’s argument that linguistic description may only approximate objective truth. By distancing language from objectivity, Nietzsche argues that language presupposes bias. Identifying such bias invites learners to analyze Austin’s argument that language may do something as much as it says something. By exploring what language does, how it injects bias and limits objectivity, students may consider Barthe’s premise that textual meaning transcends the author, and that interpretation must be negotiated across writer, reader, and culture.

The goals of such a connection are twofold. First, this project helps students address specific standards of learning about how to analyze and evaluate word choice. Second, this project encourages students to redefine reading and the purpose of the English classroom. Rather than a linear transmission of knowledge from writer to audience, this lesson encourages students to view reading as circuitous debate between author and reader, thereby expanding reading’s traditional apology about knowledge accumulation and vocabulary development to include critical thinking and analytical investigation. Properly understood, students do not read to get better at reading; they read to get better at thinking. The forthcoming analysis and lesson plan, although hardly exhaustive, work toward promoting student mastery of these concepts.

II. Literary Theorists
In pursuing these objectives, it is best to start with a bold statement: students may not know what it means to read. While students know how to read, the difference between performing a task and understanding it can be considerable. Students may misunderstand reading as a passive activity—as an act of identifying what an author said. While this is certainly a part of reading, it is not the only part. Students must consider not just what authors say but how they say it. Indeed, this is the fundamental premise underpinning all forthcoming arguments: that language invents as much as it narrates. Though the line between construction and description is murky at best, it is essential to outline this boundary as much as possible. It is essential to teach students the role language plays in forming, distorting, and concealing meaning.

Friedrich Nietzsche argues that words are only a reflection of the subject they purport to capture, referring to language as a “mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms” (Nietzsche 768). He argues that the “thing-in-itself (which would be, precisely, pure truth, truth without consequences) is impossible for even the creator of language to grasp” and concludes that such metaphors “in no way correspond to the original entities” (767). If language provides only metaphors for reality, if absolute impartiality is difficult to achieve, then language places limits on a writer’s objectivity.

The implications of this argument are considerable, especially for students in the English classroom. In the essay “Performative Utterances,” J.L. Austin unpacks the significance of linguistic subjectivity, arguing that “the more you think about truth and falsity the more you find that very few statements that we ever utter are just true or just false” (Austin 1300). Rejecting a simple dichotomy, Austin situations writing on a continuum wherein “usually there
is the question are they [the words used by an author] fair or are they not fair, are they adequate or not adequate, are they exaggerated or not exaggerated? Are they too rough, or are they perfectly precise, accurate, and so on?” (1300). The shift from ‘is this correct?’ to ‘is this fair?’ represents a shift in higher-order thinking, as the latter question requires readers to provide reasoning when forming an answer. Because an author’s description of events is circumscribed by language, it is difficult, if not impossible, to break the shackles of human subjectivity. Everything is filtered through language, requiring that man must “measure all things against man,” forgetting, however, that the “original metaphors of perception were indeed metaphors” (Nietzsche 769). If language itself is only an illusory reflection of truth, then so are authors forever distanced from that truth. Since the dominant question then shifts from true or false to fair or unfair, it is possible to see how language can, in certain contexts, be “doing something rather than merely saying something” (Austin 1290). What language does, therefore, is reflect authorial bias. Choosing among synonyms with different connotations reveals the biases and agendas of authors, thereby shifting the onus for a text’s meaning from authorial intent to reader interpretation.

By challenging the objectivity of an author, there is a newfound primacy of the reader’s role in determining meaning. In the essay “The Death of the Author,” Roland Barthes debunks the traditional premise that an “explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it” (1322). Barthes places textual meaning outside an author’s direct control, arguing that any text or speech is invariably “made of multiple writings [and] drawn from many cultures” (1325). By divesting the author of final textual agency, Barthes recognizes the myriad sociocultural factors that influence writers. The implications of this assertion, moreover, are
considerable. If authors do not or cannot exercise full agency over their texts, then the existence of a single, definitive, and correct interpretation dissipates. Rather than reading a text to identify the meaning, the death of the author reimagines reading insofar as “the [t]ext is experienced only in an activity of production” (1327). By imagining reading as an active production instead of a passive identification, Barthes encourages the same types of textual analysis (i.e. is what was said fair? Exaggerated? Precise?) as does Austin. These questions, with their invariably subjective answers, mean “the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile” (Barthes 1325).

Although such sentiment may appear to devalue the act of reading (i.e. why read something if you can never know the answer?), this view “liberates” readers from any one confining perspective, allowing students to use the terms ‘reading’ and ‘construction’ interchangeably (Barthes 1325). Reading without an author, or without an excessive reliance on authorial intent, is freeing; “to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text” (Barthes 1325). To kill the author is to remove such limits on a text, allowing readers to ply their analytical skills ad infinitum on a subject whose imaginative potential knows no bounds.

III. Connections to High School Curriculum

While important for analyzing word choice and understanding reading, the works of Nietzsche, Austin, and Barthes are rather abstract. To suitably adapt these ideas for high school students, it is necessary to situate these principles within a specific context. To this end, Aldous Huxley’s essay “Words and Behavior” provides an effective context in which to discuss the subjectivity of language and to highlight the role of readers in constructing textual meaning. Written amidst the buildup to World War II, Huxley’s essay criticizes the language used by
politicians when describing warfare to the public. Huxley argues that the rhetoric describing combat was meant to “make it appear as though wars were not fought by individuals drilled to murder one another in cold blood and without provocation, but either by impersonal forces...or else by personified abstractions” (1147). Within this thesis are clear parallels to the Nietzsche’s point about language providing metaphors that merely approximate truth, as well as Austin’s idea that language does something.

Huxley’s essay is especially valuable because he provides specific examples of the language of metaphors used to describe combat. When recounting how officials emphasize combatants as impersonal forces, Huxley notes the tendency to substitute such emotive terms as husbands or fathers for more impersonal descriptions like “rifles or troops” (1149). He is similarly skeptical of the mathematical and detached way formations of men are reduced to physics concepts (i.e. forces interacting) or geometric equations (i.e. lines swinging and sweeping) (1150). The goal of this intentional substitution, argues Huxley, is to conceal or soften the violence of warfare within the public psyche. It is far more pleasant, after all, to think of forces in conflict, an abstract term with no readily associable mental image, than it is to think of the individuals who comprise such a force.

The use of personified abstractions, like the substitution of impersonal forces, seeks the same ends, albeit through different means. To this end, Huxley describes a tendency to lend personal attributes to collective entities, criticizing language that speaks of “the enemy, in the singular, making his plans, striking his blows” (1150). By homogenizing an otherwise diverse population, Huxley argues that such language engenders more rancor toward the enemy. It is easier, after all, to quarrel with one person than a thousand, and infinitely easier to scorn one
image than the complex amalgam of factors which define a nation. The singularization of the collective is not limited to this context, however. Huxley criticizes the way battles were described, decrying the tendency to speak of individual generals fighting one another instead of describing the reality that thousands of individuals, commanded by one general, attacked thousands of other individuals, commanded by another (1152). Huxley argues that thinking in such terms reduces the wide-scale carnage of a battle to the less severe, more acceptable idea of a schoolyard scuffle—a scrap between two individuals. He maintains that the intended effect of such language was to distort the public’s perception of war, hiding its harsh reality behind soft language to minimize opposition and sustain morale.

Properly understood, Huxley’s essay provides an apt vehicle for teachers to facilitate discussions about the performative nature of reading. Consider, for example, two hypothetical descriptions of an imagined military conflict. One description opines that *troops depopulated the area of enemy combatants*, while a second account argues that *soldiers slaughtered people in a village*. When considering these claims, it’s possible that neither statement provides erroneous information. To paraphrase Austin, it’s possible that neither description is fully right or wrong. Moreover, the two statements carry vastly different connotations. The former sounds detached and emotionless, while the latter invokes anger and sorrow. Disparate emotions emerge from two accounts of the same event, yet neither description is false to the point of being considered a lie. How can this be? Which version is appropriate? By posing these questions to students, teachers can model Barthe’s argument that textual meaning is a negotiated construction between author, reader, and context. Questions of appropriateness do
not provide objective answers so much as they invite subjective interpretations. They require students to ask the question posted by Austin: which description is fair?

The contrasting verbiage of ‘depopulate’ and ‘slaughter’ further illustrates this point. The former means to reduce the population of an area. Such a reduction is, indeed, an ancillary point relative to the latter’s definition. But the word slaughter does something. It transcends the idea of killing and implies a sense of inequality between the combatants. It projects an idea of ruthless aggression on behalf of the assailant toward the victim. Conversely, the word depopulate omits the actual fate of the assailants. Although unlikely, it is conceivable that the military action forcibly moved the population from one area to another; hence, the area was depopulated. Such ambiguity serves in part to reduce, or eliminate entirely, the emotion behind the word, whereas slaughter does precisely the opposite and intensifies the description’s affective impact. In this sense, the conversation inspired by Huxley’s essay directly address Austin’s argument about what language does. In this case, students can consider how word choice and connotative meaning can conceal or intensify the emotional impact of an author’s message.

Discerning which word is appropriate, moreover, depends upon one’s perspective. There may not be a single, definitive answer. From one perspective, the term enemy combatant may feel appropriate. From another viewpoint, friend or neighbor may feel more accurate. These terms are not mutually exclusive, moreover. In the subsequent debate about which term is correct (or, as contends Austin, which term is fairer), the consequences of not describing ‘the thing-in-itself’ are made clear. As Nietzsche writes, “the full and adequate expression of an object...is something contradictory and impossible” (768). Likening absolute objectivity as an
asymptote that the arc of language may never fully reach, Nietzsche emphasizes the biases that linguistic choice casts upon a topic. Huxley’s essay provides specific examples of this point through a discussion of the language used to describe warfare.

IV. A Lesson Plan for High School Sophomores

It is frustrating that the applicability of English should be so latent, that its relevancy often lies in the means used to achieve an end rather than the end itself. If students view language as objective and impartial, if they see reading as just understanding what the author said, then the subject’s relevancy is further obscured. There is little reason for reading beyond personal enjoyment or knowledge accumulation. Yet if students engage Nietzsche’s arguments that language is subjective, if they see Austin’s point that language does something as much as it says something, and if they appreciate Barthes’ understanding that reading is about construction as much as decoding, then teachers have an adequate and satisfying answer to their students’ questions about why a text is being read. Students read, not only to get better at reading, but to get better at thinking.

This thinking, moreover, directly connects to state standards of learning. Standard 10.4i requires students to “[e]valuate how an author’s specific word choices, syntax, tone, and voice shape the intended meaning of the text” (“Virginia Standards of Learning”). Standard 10.3c requires students to “[d]iscriminate between connotative and denotative meanings and interpret the connotation” (“Virginia Standards of Learning”). Huxley’s essay provides an apt vehicle for addressing these standards, which relate directly to Nietzsche’s point about the subjectivity of language and Austin’s claim that language does something. When debating the appropriateness of saying depopulate or slaughter, students must discriminate between the
connotative and denotative meanings of these terms. When understanding why someone might use one word instead of another, students must evaluate how these choices influence one’s intended meaning. Although the topic of conversation may be Huxley today, the issue of bias in language occurs in many situations. Consequently, these ideas provide excellent opportunities for educators to introduce current event topics that relate to issues of word choice and connotation.

Barthes writes “[I]inguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing,” resulting in every text being “eternally written here and now” (1324). Discussions of Huxley’s essay—alongside rotating current event articles—help students realize that reading is about more than identifying what an author says. Having aligned the writing of Austin, Barthes, and Nietzsche with Aldous Huxley’s essay, and having explained both a specific goal (mastering relevant standards) and a broader purpose (changing student perceptions of reading) to this connection, the final section of this project provides a mini-unit adapting these ideas for the high school English classroom.
Lesson Plan #1 (90 minutes)

Objectives:
1.) Contrast the terms ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation’
2.) Identify/explain literary principles

Instructional Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-Up Activity: Think, Pair, Share</td>
<td>Ask students to define what it means to read. Then, direct them to share their definitions with those at their table before sharing out loud as a class. As a class, and based on student responses, decide upon an adequate definition before starting the lesson. Explain to students that this definition will be revisited after the conclusion of the unit.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Hook: “Charades”</td>
<td>4 volunteers are selected to act out various words ranging from the concrete (i.e. flag) to the abstract (i.e. courage), and from the general (i.e. war) to the specific (i.e. Andrew Jackson). Students act out the words but cannot talk. Subsequent teacher-led discussion is to reveal our reliance on language, explaining how much longer it took to describe the more abstract and specific words than the concrete and general terms. Teacher facilitates discussion about the role of language in communicating meaning.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction: Notes</td>
<td>Teacher reviews the presentation (see Appendix A) that defines and contrasts the terms ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation.’ Teacher also explains Nietzsche’s argument that language cannot always perfectly capture the objective truth of something.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-Group Work: Paraphrasing</td>
<td>To illustrate Nietzsche’s ideas about language, students are divided into small groups. One recorder is chosen from the group to record all student responses. Teacher poses the following challenge: “take 2 minutes to write down as many synonyms for the word ‘overweight’ as you possibly can.” After two minutes, ask students to count the total number of responses for each group. Provide starburst for the winning group(s)</td>
<td>5-10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-Class Discussion: Denotation/Connotation</td>
<td>On the Smart Board, project a continuum that goes from (-10: negative) to (10: positive), with zero in the middle. Ask groups to share synonyms from previous exercise and facilitate conversation about where each word belongs on the continuum based on its connotation. Facilitate conversation about the difficulty of ‘accurately’ or ‘objectively’ describing a topic—and connect these points to the earlier notes about Nietzsche</td>
<td>15-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction: Notes</td>
<td>Teacher reviews the presentation (see Appendix A) explaining Austin’s argument that it’s better to ask, “is this fair?” than “is this true?” and Barthe’s argument that textual meaning is negotiated between author, reader, and cultural context.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure: Exit-Ticket</td>
<td>Students complete exit-ticket #1 (see Appendix B) reviewing denotation/connotation and the points of Nietzsche, Austin, and Barthes.</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative Assessment:
- Observe student discussion; collect/assess student exittickets
Lesson Plan #2 (90 minutes)

Objectives:
1.) Analyze how author word choice influences intended meaning
2.) Identify changes in one’s definition of reading

Instructional Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction:</td>
<td>Teacher reviews denotation/connotation and the aspects of literary theory</td>
<td>5-10  min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>discussed in lesson #1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-Class Reading:</td>
<td>Read out loud Aldous Huxley’s essay “Words and Behavior.” Pause at times to</td>
<td>30-45 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldous Huxley Essay</td>
<td>facilitate student annotation and discussion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Work:</td>
<td>Teacher directs students to complete reading comprehension questions on</td>
<td>10-15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Aldous Huxley’s essay “Words and Behavior” (see Appendix C) while monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>student completion and addressing student questions as necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Class Discussion:</td>
<td>Teacher facilitates conversation reviewing student responses to reading</td>
<td>10-20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>comprehension questions, drawing connections between Huxley’s essay and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Nietzsche, Austin, and Barthes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure: Exit-Ticket</td>
<td>Teacher reviews original definition of reading discussed from lesson #1.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher directs students to complete exit-ticket #2 where they reflect on how</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their definition has changed (or not changed), and whether they agree with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barthes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative Assessment:
- Collect/assess student discussion questions
- Collect/assess student exit-ticket
Lesson Plan #3 (90 minutes):

Objectives:
1.) Explain connotation influences a reader’s interpretation of an event
2.) Analyze how author word choice influences intended meaning
3.) Draw connections between literary principles & real-world events
4.) Debate/discuss the ethics of an author’s word choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole-Class Game:</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Spins from a Hat&quot;</strong> Teacher asks for several volunteers. Students pick statements that have a negative connotation and attempt to spin these statements by describing them in a more positive connotation. Teacher then facilitates conversation about these statements, asking, “How do these statements utilize word choice and connotation to influence meaning? Are these statements lying? Are they fair? Are they appropriate? Why or why not? Relate this conversation to Austin’s idea about performative utterances, and to Barthe’s idea about who determines the meaning of a statement.”</td>
<td>5-10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-Class Reading:</td>
<td><strong>Article</strong> Students read a current events article independently, underlining important passages, circling confusing sections, and adding comments in the margins.</td>
<td>15-20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Work:</td>
<td><strong>“Socratic Seminar Questions”</strong> Teacher directs students identify questions and prepare arguments about the current events article. Teacher circulates throughout the room, addressing questions and providing clarification to prepare students for Socratic Seminar.</td>
<td>20-30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socratic Seminar</td>
<td>Students participate in Socratic Seminar (See Appendix D) in which they share and debate their thoughts. Teacher provides moderation/prompting where necessary.</td>
<td>20-40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>Teacher introduces essay (See Appendix E) &amp; addresses student questions.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative Assessment:
- Collect/assess student Seminar Prep questions

Summative Assessment:
- Assess student participation in Socratic Seminar
- Assess student essay (to be submitted at appointed due date)
Appendix A: Unit Notes

Slide 1

Unit Notes:
“Words and Behavior”

Slide 2

A Problem of Choice

English has one of the largest vocabularies of any language

Question: How many words are in the English language?

Answer: Roughly 171,000 (not including slang)

Implication: have you ever struggled to find the right word to describe a feeling or situation?

Slide 3

Paraphrasing

• What?
• Reword an idea using different words
• Keep what is meant; change how it is said
Denotation & Connotation

Denotation
- Dictionary definition
- How you interpret the word intellectually
- Ex: Dumb = Lacking Intelligence

Connotation
- Feeling of a word (i.e. positive/negative, good/bad, mean/nice, etc.)
- How you interpret the word emotionally
- Ex: Dumb = Negative/bad/mean

Review
- Paraphrasing?
  - Rewording an idea/concept
  - Change how something is said
- Denotation?
  - Dictionary definition of a word
  - How you understand a word intellectually
- Connotation?
  - How you understand a word emotionally
  - i.e. good/bad, positive/negative, nice/mean

- How does paraphrasing relate to denotation/connotation?
  - Words are complex
  - Paraphrasing is imperfect
  - Even if you keep the denotation, the connotation might change

- Why does this matter?
  - Well-chosen words allow speaker to manipulate their connotation & thus influence the audience’s emotions
  - You can manipulate without lying!
  - Connotation = Control

Literary Principles
Linguistic Subjectivity

First, an event happens:
Lisa and Eric are dating but break-up.

Then, you describe event with language:
"Lisa and Eric broke up"
"Lisa and Eric are no longer dating"
"Lisa dumped Eric"

PROBLEM:
Choices in words/syntax makes it difficult, if not impossible, to describe something objectively or accurately

Friedrich Nietzsche

Important Quotation:
"We possess only metaphors of things which in no way correspond to the original entities."
J.L. Austin

Language describes things
Ex. 1: Lisa dumped Eric
Ex. 2: Lisa and Eric are no longer together

Language also does things (i.e. shows bias):
Ex. 1: "Dumped" is harsh, shows more sympathy toward Eric
Ex. 2: More neutral, doesn't cast either party in a harsh light

Choosing words among options inserts author bias (this is what writing or speaking does)

J.L. Austin

Important Quote:
"The more you think about truth and falsity the more you find that very few statements we ever utter are just true or just false. Usually there is the question: are they fair or are they not fair, are they adequate or not adequate?"

Ideas to Consider:
If language cannot perfectly describe objective truth (Nietzsche), then asking "is this true?" isn't enough. Instead, readers must ask "is this fair or appropriate depending on the context?"

Review

Nietzsche
Language may not be able to objectively capture the truth

Austin
Because language may not objectively capture the truth, it does something
The reader should ask: "is this fair?"
Roland Barthes

Readers construct textual meaning:

Reading is about:
- Understanding what was said
- Evaluating how it was said
- Constructing meaning

Important Quotations:

“It is language which speaks, not the author”

“Every text is eternally written here and now”
Appendix B: Exit-Ticket #1

1. What is the denotation of the word “fat”? 

2. What is the connotation of the word “fat”? 

3. Contrast the connotations of “fat” and “overweight” 

4. Which literary theorist argued that language makes it difficult to be objective and impartial?
   A.) Nietzsche
   B.) Austin
   C.) Barthes

5. Which literary theorist argued that language ‘does’ something?
   A.) Nietzsche
   B.) Austin
   C.) Barthes

6. Which literary theorist argued that the reader is just as important, if not more important, than the author in determining a text’s meaning?
   A.) Nietzsche
   B.) Austin
   C.) Barthes
Appendix C: Reading Comprehension Questions

1.) Contrast the connotations of these terms: "troop" and "son"

2.) What is the intended effect of using the term 'troop' instead of 'son'?

3.) Per Austin, which term do you think is fairer, or more appropriate?

4.) Contrast the connotations of these phrases: "force" and "shoot bullets and drop high explosives"

5.) What is the intended effect of using the term "force" instead of the phrase "shoot bullets and drop high explosives"?

6.) Per Austin, which term do you think is fairer, or more appropriate?

7.) What does Huxley argue about the language used to describe war?

8.) Do you agree with this argument? Why or why not?

9.) Explain how Huxley’s essays relates to the literary principles we discussed in class
Appendix D: Socratic Seminar

**Directions:** Today you will read and discuss an article that directly relates to the literary principles we've discussed in class. Review the rubric by which I will assess your contribution to the Socratic Seminar.

### How You Will Be Graded:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socratic Seminar</th>
<th><strong>Excellent</strong> (18-20)</th>
<th><strong>Good</strong> (16-18)</th>
<th><strong>Average</strong> (14-16)</th>
<th><strong>Developing</strong> (14 or Below)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student masterfully:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ shared ideas and/or posed engaging questions to the discussion</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>___ shared ideas and/or posed engaging questions to the discussion</td>
<td>The student could improve in 1 or more areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ grounded thoughts &amp; comments in our class readings &amp; discussions</td>
<td>___ grounded thoughts &amp; comments in our class readings &amp; discussions</td>
<td>___ grounded thoughts &amp; comments in our class readings &amp; discussions</td>
<td>___ grounded thoughts &amp; comments in our class readings &amp; discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ respected the sensitive and collaborative nature of the discussion</td>
<td>___ respected the sensitive and collaborative nature of the discussion</td>
<td>___ respected the sensitive and collaborative nature of the discussion</td>
<td>___ respected the sensitive and collaborative nature of the discussion</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Total:** ______ / 20 pts.
**Appendix E: Unit Essay**

**Prompt:** Consider the current events article we read in class. Was the statement ethical? Why or why not? How would Huxley respond to this statement? In your response, cite specific evidence from the article. Additionally, draw specific connections to the literary principles discussed in class. In your conclusion, consider the significance of your answer—and explain why your interpretation matters.

**Length:** 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1" margins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Excellent</strong> (5)</th>
<th><strong>Good</strong> (4 -- 4.5)</th>
<th><strong>Average</strong> (3.5 -- 4)</th>
<th><strong>Developing</strong> (3 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>The piece masterfully:</td>
<td>The piece:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in 1 or more areas:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in 2 or more areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Formulates a clear thesis</td>
<td>___ Formulates a clear thesis</td>
<td>___ Formulates a clear thesis</td>
<td>___ Formulates a clear thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Supports the thesis with specific &amp; detailed reasoning</td>
<td>___ Supports the thesis with specific &amp; detailed reasoning</td>
<td>___ Supports the thesis with specific &amp; detailed reasoning</td>
<td>___ Supports the thesis with specific &amp; detailed reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Relates the thesis to the literary principles discussed in class</td>
<td>___ Relates the thesis to the literary principles discussed in class</td>
<td>___ Relates the thesis to the literary principles discussed in class</td>
<td>___ Relates the thesis to the literary principles discussed in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence</strong></td>
<td>The piece effectively integrates textual evidence from the article in proper MLA format</td>
<td>The piece integrates textual evidence from the article in proper MLA format</td>
<td>The piece integrates textual evidence, but there may be issues with MLA formatting</td>
<td>The piece does not integrate textual evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The piece masterfully includes:</td>
<td>The piece includes:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in 1 or more areas:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in 2 or more areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ an engaging hook</td>
<td>___ an engaging hook</td>
<td>___ an engaging hook</td>
<td>___ an engaging hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ clear transitions between paragraphs &amp; ideas</td>
<td>___ clear transitions between paragraphs &amp; ideas</td>
<td>___ clear transitions between paragraphs &amp; ideas</td>
<td>___ clear transitions between paragraphs &amp; ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice &amp; Grammar</strong></td>
<td>The piece uses clear word choice and proper grammar throughout the entire piece</td>
<td>The piece uses clear word choice and proper grammar for most of the piece</td>
<td>Errors in word choice or grammar begin to impede the clarity of the author’s ideas</td>
<td>Errors in word choice or grammar impede the clarity of the author’s ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** ________ / 20 pts.
Works Cited


Sean Heron

Dr. Hoy

ENG 6800 Reflective Writing

6 May 2020

Building Analytical Frameworks: Toward a Reflective Dual Enrollment English Course

I. The Importance (and Interconnectedness) of Reflection and Transfer

Like ice-cream in July, learning without reflection is fleeting, liable to melt into an indistinguishable amalgam of discrete facts and unrelated concepts lacking any coherent structure. Kathleen Blake Yancey defines reflection as a “synthetic knowledge-making activity keyed to uncertainty and ambiguity” and argues that reflective practices require “students to personally connect with the course material by considering prior knowledge and experiences, other courses, and societal issues” (8-9). The importance of these personal connections cannot be overstated. Citing research conducted by Perkins and Solomon, Anne Beaufort describes transfer as beginning with the ability to “detect similarities between prior tasks and the current one” (25). The similarities between reflection and transfer, therefore, are striking. If reflection helps students examine their thought process and draw connections between seemingly disparate contexts, then reflection is the means by which students transfer writing skills across essays, classes, and occasions. As such, it is incumbent upon educators to incorporate reflective practices in their teaching.

To implement reflective pedagogy, however, educators must first recognize and appreciate the cognitive sophistication of transfer. Although remembering previous content is important, its complexity exceeds factual recall. Transfer requires learners “to adapt prior
knowledge and skills appropriately to the new context rather than simply apply previous knowledge and skills without alteration for the new situation” (Beaufort 27). Such adaptation emphasizes the inventiveness of transfer. When faced with an academic task, students must not only recall a skill and recognize its applicability, but they must also adapt that skill in novel ways to fit the demands of a new rhetorical context. The extent and scope of such adaptation will naturally vary by situation. To this end, Horner situates the complexity of inventive transfer on a continuum, classifying transfer into two distinct types: “near, or low-road” transfer, where students apply skills across relatively similar situations, and “far, or high-road” transfer, where students draw connections between seemingly different contexts (118). When scaffolding class activities, it is imperative for teachers to address both types, though it is perhaps prudent to begin with low-road transfer. High-road transfer is not a one-time activity but a lifelong effort that must be nurtured and facilitated by consistent, effective reflection.

II. How and When to Facilitate Reflection

When transferring skills across contexts, students move recursively, not unidirectionally. In a four-part schema outlining transfer, Taczak and Robertson explain how students “look backward to recall previous knowledge... look inward to review the current writing situation they are working in... look forward to project how their current knowledge about writing connects to other possible academic writing situations... and look outward to theorize how the role of their current identities as reflective writing practitioners connects to larger academic writing situations”(46). Points three and four have important implications for the timing and scope of planned reflective activities.
If transfer involves looking backward and forward, if it requires students to remember a skill and predict its usefulness in the future, then educators should integrate reflective activities consistently before, during, and after a unit. To this end, Nelissen outlines three modes of reflection: anticipatory reflection, where students consider the skills necessary to complete a novel task, concurrent reflection, where students reflect on their work while completing a task, and afterward reflection, where students evaluate the success of their efforts to achieve a stated objective (97). Facilitating anticipatory and concurrent reflection helps students to look in the numerous directions advocated by Taczak and Robertson. Consistent, recurring reflection also helps students to situate themselves as contributors within a larger academic discourse. As students draw connections between topics within a discipline, they invariably develop a deeper understanding of the discipline itself. These cognitive moves form the thread on which student education is strung. Reflection and transfer allow students to see past initial differences between writing assignments to identify rhetorical similarities and meet academic expectations.

III. Potential Obstacles to Facilitating Reflection

To facilitate consistent, effective reflection is a challenging endeavor. As the importance of education grows, and as college enrollment increases, students are increasingly “juggling multiple full-time commitments including work, family obligations, and volunteer or internship experiences...with the result that time is perhaps their most precious, and most limited, resource” (Clark 151). Even among high school students, who might appear to fit the ideal of a full-time student, time is invariably constrained. Work, extracurricular involvement,
participation in sports, and volunteerism take up the lion’s share of student time and attention—to say nothing of homework and familial obligations.

Ironically, student efforts to advance their education can become the very factors that impede it. Seeking academic status and college acceptance, students often select as many honors and advanced placement courses as possible, with a resulting schedule that can produce a staggering volume of work. Reflecting upon the nonacademic effects of homework, Galloway et al. found that students in high-performing high schools reported 3.11 hours of homework per night (498). When completing so much work, there is a real risk of conflating quantity with rigor—of prioritizing work completion while disregarding the quality of submitted work. This trend may be exacerbated by a litany of multiple-choice exams that carve a complex, nuanced curriculum into discrete, easily digestible facts. Without intentional planning and interdepartmental collaboration, opportunities for student reflection are often the first activities cut in the effort to cover all relevant content. Without these reflective activities, the likelihood of transfer diminishes considerably.

It is not surprising, given the lack of time devoted to conscientious reflection, that students can fail to “abstract what is taught in one course and repurpose it for another” (Taczak and Roberston 57). Roozen attributes this difficulty to problems “accessing [a] persons’ tacit writing-related knowledge, abilities, and dispositions” (250). If students cannot explicate their knowledge, if their understanding remains unnamed, then it becomes much harder for learners to look backward or inward, much less forward or outward. Referencing a study conducted by Cirio in 2014, Michael Neal remarks that many first-year composition students “did not have the vocabulary they would need to articulate criteria, and without those, they were unable to
assess their own writing” (71). When recounting the struggles of students in an FYC theme-based course, Taczak and Robertson noted how “participants weren’t able to articulate explicitly what they had learned in the course and thus what they might be transferring” (57). To address this matter, Taczak and Robertson identified eight key terms for students to understand when transferring writing skills across contexts: rhetorical situation, audience, reflection, purpose, knowledge, discourse community, and context (45). The forthcoming unit plan adds a ninth key term for students to define and reference when reflecting on their writing: analysis.

While Taczak and Robertson found that students could not effectively define writing, I noticed that students could not adequately define analysis. This deficiency was especially problematic given the term’s prominent role in the course objective. Student definitions were vague, and at times misleading, resulting in a cognitive dissonance where students appreciated the importance of analysis while recognizing their inability to define it. Of course, asking students to define analysis encouraged my own efforts at a definition, whereupon I found myself frustratingly inarticulate. To this end, Flash, citing Schön, notes how “[o]ften we cannot say what it is that we know” because “our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing,” a point which suggests how difficult it can be to develop an actionable metacognitive vocabulary (230-231). Although I could ‘do’ analysis when prompted, from a pedagogical perspective, this skill was rendered moot by my deficient vocabulary. If I could not describe analysis, then I could not teach it. If I could not teach it, then my students could not reflect upon, learn, and transfer this skill across educational contexts.
IV. A Unit Plan to Promote Reflection and Facilitate Transfer

When embedding reflective practices consistently to promote transfer of learning, educators must know their target audience: their students. To this end, the forthcoming unit plan was designed for a dual-enrollment English course taught at a suburban high school in Virginia. This class is unique in that high school seniors receive both secondary and college credit for their efforts. The following is the official course objective:

This course will help to enhance your writing expertise, including your grammatical skills, vocabulary usage, and critical thinking abilities. Through assigned readings, essays, and classroom activities, you will learn to analyze information through accurate reading and logical thinking and to acquire, organize, document, and present ideas clearly and precisely (“English 101 Syllabus”).

Additionally, the course describes four specific learning outcomes:

1.) Formulate a thesis that clearly states an opinion on a specific subject.
2.) Demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate level of formality and tone for an academic or professional audience.
3.) Demonstrate the ability to produce a correctly formatted outline and to create clear and concise writing, which reflects a deliberate organizational pattern with adequate, synthesized support.
4.) Express her or his thoughts in clear and effective prose that has few stylistic or grammatical flaws (“English 101 Syllabus”).

As the course objective (i.e. analyze information) and learning outcomes (i.e. create clear, concise writing) emphasize transferable skills applicable across a broad array of rhetorical
contexts, the dual-enrollment curriculum is especially well-suited for reflective pedagogy.

Accordingly, the following unit provides students with an operational definition to contextualize the abstract term of analysis. Subsequent lessons provide students with opportunities to apply their definition of analysis to create analytical frameworks, a cognitive schema that students can transfer across writing contexts. Per Beaufort, these lessons “create broad, instead of bounded, frames for the course content” (26). Rather than address a discrete concept (i.e. factual information about a specific text), the following activities invite the “application of learning to new tasks” through “continual revisiting of key concepts” as part of the unit’s framing of knowledge as something “to go, not just to use on site” (Beaufort 24, 37). By constructing analytical frameworks, and by reflecting on their construction, students learn how to design their own organizational patterns when writing. Of course, the class’s four learning outcomes are not isolated concepts but interconnected skills. Understanding how to outline and organize an essay encourages students to consider other rhetorical aspects such as voice, tone, style, thesis, etc. By introducing reflection about “deep structures, broad concepts, and process strategies” via the use of analytical frameworks, students will reflect on strategies that serve as “tools not only for getting writing done for an immediate rhetorical situation, but for transfer of learning to future writing tasks” (Beaufort 33). Such understanding moves students toward the primary objective of the course--to analyze information and present ideas clearly--and toward the transfer of an invaluable skill that helps students situate themselves as writers within a larger academic discourse.

V. Pedagogical Strategies
As Sommers indicates, the benefits of reflection and transfer are twofold: not only do students “become more aware of their composing processes and of the choices they have made and might make in the drafting and revising of a work in progress,” but they also assist teachers “in responding productively to the students’ drafts so they can produce an improved final product” (272). When both parties are focused on improving the process, the product naturally benefits.

The forthcoming unit plan requires students to analyze a topic and to reflect on their analysis. The unit culminates in a portfolio that must include at least three artifacts: 1.) a reflective cover letter, 2.) a working essay draft, and 3.) a revised essay draft. Students are encouraged to include other artifacts (i.e. multimodal reflections, their original analytical framework, their revised analytical framework, etc.) in the portfolio to document their progress in the unit. By allowing students to pick and choose which reflective exercises were helpful when completing an assignment, students “can make informed selections and in so doing demonstrate their range of thinking, abilities, and rhetorical savvy” (Neal 68).

While students complete the reflective cover letter at the end of the unit, other activities such as the multimodal reflections occur in real time as students draft the essay. The multimodal nature of reflection allows students to write, create a video, or produce a podcast describing their own analysis, echoing Silver’s argument about how audio and visual components within a digital learning environment can magnify “the potential for reflection’s role within this learning cycle” (167). Effective reflection, therefore, is ubiquitous. It is not a standalone activity, but something to be done before, during, and after learning new content. Such ubiquity encourages what Clark describes as a “gestalt effect whereby students
examine the pieces of their lives and shape them into a connected whole” (151). Like Silver, Clark encourages teachers to develop portfolios composed of multiple artifacts completed during and after coursework so students can “explore and document their own growth and development in writing...in preparation for the next semester” (155). This last point echoes Taczak and Robertson’s claim about the need to look forward when anticipating how current skills may apply to future contexts.

The decision to incorporate a reflective podcast echoes Roozen’s point that open-ended questions about specific writing tasks can “invite writers to adopt a stance...that is tentative and exploratory rather than grounded in certainty” (253). The questions guiding the podcast focus on a specific task (i.e. the *who/what is to blame?* essay) but remain open-ended enough to discourage a yes/no, right/wrong dichotomy. That students discuss these questions with a group of peers, instead of directly with the teacher, has another intended benefit: it allows reflection to happen “in community, in interaction with others” (Rodgers 845).

**VI. Assessment**

While students submit a final portfolio at the end of the unit, and while portfolio artifacts work in concert with one another, these assignments are scored separately and appear independently in the gradebook. For example, students receive individual grades for the cover letter, the revised draft of the essay, and the multimodal reflections. As Neal suggests, the cover letter is designed “to be in dialogue with, and to be in response to the other portfolio texts” (77). Consequently, I am assessing different skills with the cover letter than I am with the analytical essay, a point which explains why these assignments have specialized rubrics and warrant separate grades. Moreover, this decision reflects my unique educational context,
where local policies limit any one assignment from affecting more than 20% of a student’s quarterly grade. To this end, grading artifacts separately, while recognizing their interconnected nature, is the best fit for students within this educational context.
Reflective Unit Lesson Plans

Course: English 101 (Dual-Enrollment course)

Course Objective:
This course will help to enhance your writing expertise, including your grammatical skills, vocabulary usage, and critical thinking abilities. Through assigned readings, essays, and classroom activities, you will learn to analyze information through accurate reading and logical thinking and to acquire, organize, document, and present ideas clearly and precisely.

Learning Standards:
1.) Formulate a thesis that clearly states an opinion on a specific subject.
2.) Demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate level of formality and tone for an academic or professional audience.
3.) Demonstrate the ability to produce a correctly formatted outline and to create clear and concise writing, which reflects a deliberate organizational pattern with adequate, synthesized support.
4.) Express her or his thoughts in clear and effective prose that has few stylistic or grammatical flaws.

Description of Lesson Plans:
The following lesson plans were designed for high-school seniors enrolled in a dual-enrollment English course. Classes meet every other day for 90 minutes. The first three lessons occur sequentially and mark the beginning of our work with research-based analytical writing. The unit is reflective in nature, designed to teach students how to analyze and how to reflect on that analysis to develop the metacognitive vocabulary necessary to transfer their learning to future contexts. To this end, students write a research paper in response to a question stem: *who or what is to blame for (insert topic)*? This prompt allows students to choose a topic, thereby differentiating the essay’s content to reflect student interest. Yet the prompt is also structured enough to allow for a common analytical focus. The first three lessons require students to reflect on their metacognitive vocabulary, define rhetorical terms, and apply these terms in different contexts. These lessons also encourage students to reflect both independently and collaboratively about their evolving understanding of research and analysis via multimodal methods (i.e. written reflection, videos, podcasts, etc.)

The fourth lesson occurs later in the unit, after students have composed a first draft, and emphasizes peer-review and reflective interviewing as a means for students to identify growth with specific writing skills. The fifth lesson occurs at the end of the unit and outlines the reflective cover letter students will write for inclusion in their final portfolio.
Lesson #1: “Understanding Analysis”

Supporting Theory/Theorist:


Learning Objectives:

- Define analysis
- Describe how to analyze a topic

Warm-Up (15 minutes):

- Students read independently

Independent Work (10 minutes):

- Students complete part 1 of defining key terms assignment
  - See Appendix A: Defining Key Terms

Small-Group & Whole-Class Discussion (10-30 minutes):

- Students discuss questions in small groups (4-6 students)
- Students discuss questions as a whole class (facilitated by teacher)
- Teacher synthesizes responses to provide an operational definition for analysis
  - See Appendix B: Reflective Unit Notes

Guided Practice (30 minutes):

- Teacher describes how to create an analytical framework
- Students create & apply an analytical framework to a text (Macbeth)
  - See Appendix C1: Practice Analysis

Homework (due by Class #2):

- Complete parts 2 & 3 of “Defining Key Terms” Assignment
  - See Appendix A2: Multimodal Reflection #1

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student practice analyses; give feedback</td>
<td>Collect/assess multimodal reflection #1 (at due date)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Lesson #2: “Creating Analytical Frameworks”

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Learning Objectives:
- Describe how to organize thoughts/ideas within an analytical essay
- Analyze a topic in response to a prompt

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Read independently

Peer-Review/Discussion (15-30 minutes):
- Teacher facilitates peer-review of practice analysis
- Teacher explains expectations, emphasizes identifying organizational structure
- See Appendix C2: Peer-Review of Practice Analysis
- Discuss how to organize ideas within an analytical framework
  - See Appendix B: Reflective Unit Notes

Direct Instruction (20-30 minutes):
- Teacher explains “Who is to Blame?” Research Paper
  - See Appendix D1: Who is to Blame? Research Paper
- Teacher explains expectations of college research/academic writing
  - See Appendix D2: Graphing Academic Writing
- Teacher review strengths/limitations of an example essay relative to paper rubric

Writing Workshop (30-45 minutes):
- Students choose topic
- Students create analytical framework for addressing prompt
  - See Appendix E: Scaffolding for Research Paper
- Teacher facilitates peer conferences with students individually or in small groups

Closure (5 minutes):
- Students submit topic of choice; complete exit-ticket describing analytical framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Review exit-ticket; consider student choices of topic, progress toward analytical framework</td>
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<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #3: “Reflecting on Analytical Frameworks”

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Learning Objectives:
- Describe how to give constructive, professional feedback
- Adapt writing/thinking to reflect peer feedback, improve analysis

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Students read independently

Peer-Editing (30-60 minutes):
- Teacher explains expectations of peer-editing
- Teacher facilitates peer-editing sessions (form groups of 3)
- Students review 2 peers’ analytical frameworks
- Students receive feedback from 2 peers
  - See Appendix F: Peer-Review of Analytical Frameworks

Multimodal Reflection (15-30 minutes):
- Teacher explains assignment, rubric, expectations
- Students reflect on analytical framework, peer feedback, writing process so far
  - See Appendix G: Multimodal Reflection #2

Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Observe peer review sessions; review peer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>review worksheets</td>
<td>due date (this is the second summative grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to appear in the gradebook from this unit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #4: “Reviewing First Drafts through Reflective Interviewing”

(*Note: This lesson occurs later in the unit, after students have submitted the first draft of their essay and after the teacher has reviewed/commented on the first draft.)

Supporting Theory/Theorist:


Learning Objectives:
- Analyze an analysis of a topic
- Identify changes in thoughts or attitudes as a result of drafting/revising

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Students read independently

Independent Work (15-20 minutes):
- Students review (and reflect on) teacher comments on first draft
  - See Appendix H: Reflections on First Draft Feedback

Direct Instruction (5-10 minutes)
- Teacher explains expectations & requirements of reflective podcast
- Teacher addresses student questions

Small-Group Work: Reflective Podcasts (30-60 minutes):
- Teacher organizes students into groups of 4
- Teacher explains reflective podcast assignment
- Students complete reflective podcasts
  - See Appendix I: Reflective Podcast

Closure (5-10 minutes)
- Teacher circulates throughout the room, asking each group to share important observations from the reflective podcast

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student reflections on teacher comments</td>
<td>Collect/assess podcast (this is the third summative grade to appear in the gradebook from this unit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #5: “Reflecting on the Analytical Process”

(*Note: This lesson occurs at the end of the unit as students compile their portfolios and submit the final, graded drafts of their essays.)

Supporting Theory/Theorist:


Learning Objectives:
- Identify & explain transferable skills developed during unit
- Predict how writing skills might transfer to future rhetorical contexts

Warm-Up (10 minutes):
- Students read independently

Direct Instruction (10-15 minutes)
- Teacher reviews requirements of unit portfolio
  - See Appendix J: Unit Portfolio Table of Contents
- Teacher explains reflective cover letter (requirements, rubric, etc.)
  - See Appendix K: Reflective Cover Letter

Timed Writing (60 minutes)
- Students write reflective cover letter
- Students compile unit portfolio

Closure (5-10 minutes):
- Students submit unit portfolio

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observe student writing of cover letter/ compilation of unit portfolio</td>
<td>Review/assess reflective cover letter (4th summative grade of unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/assess “Who or what is to blame?” Essay (5th summative grade of unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A1: Defining Key Terms

Directions (Part 1 of 2): Answer questions 1-5 to the best of your ability:

1.) How do you define analysis?

2.) Based on your definition in question 1, how do you analyze a topic?

3.) When you’re writing a formal paper, how do you organize your ideas?

4.) What does it mean, when writing an essay, to conduct and cite research?

5.) How does research relate to analysis?

Directions (Part 2 of 2): After participating in the class discussion, answer questions 6-8:

6.) How do you define analysis?

7.) Based on your definition in question 4, how do you analyze a topic?

8.) When you’re writing a formal paper, how do you organize your ideas?
Appendix A2: Multimodal Reflection #1

Directions: Complete a reflection in which you respond to one or more of the following questions. Your response should read as a cohesive narrative, not as a series of answers to questions.

- Before completing this exercise, how familiar were you with the term *analysis*?
- Have you been asked to “analyze” before? If so, describe the context.
- In part 1, how easy (or how difficult) was it for you to define analysis, or describe how to analyze?
- How did your answers change to these questions change?
- How might this change affect your writing moving forward in this class (or in future classes)?
- Respond to any self-generated question you have about these questions or our discussion

You have a choice in how you respond. Choose ONE (1) method:

1.) Written Response (1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, size 12 font)
2.) Video (3-5 minutes)
3.) Podcast/Audio file (3-5 minutes)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Excellent (9-10)</th>
<th>Good (8-9)</th>
<th>Average (7-8)</th>
<th>Developing (7 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__ addresses one or more questions</td>
<td>The reflection: ___ addresses one or more questions</td>
<td>The reflection could improve in 1 of the following areas: ___ addresses one or more questions</td>
<td>The reflection could improve in 2 of the following areas: ___ addresses one or more questions</td>
<td>Errors in word choice/grammar and/or editing impede the clarity of the student’s reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection</td>
<td>___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection</td>
<td>___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection</td>
<td>___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ shows thoughtful &amp; meaningful insight</td>
<td>___ shows thoughtful &amp; meaningful insight</td>
<td>___ shows thoughtful &amp; meaningful insight</td>
<td>___ shows thoughtful &amp; meaningful insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Format

The reflection is polished and professional. If written, the reflection uses appropriate word choice and grammar. If done as a video or audio file, the sound and editing are clear and accessible.

The reflection is mostly polished and professional. If written, the reflection uses appropriate word choice and grammar for the most part. If done as a video or audio file, the sound and editing are clear and accessible.

The reflection is somewhat polished and professional. If written, the reflection uses appropriate word choice and grammar for the most part. If done as a video or audio file, the sound and editing are clear and accessible.

Total: _______ / 20 pts.
Appendix B: Unit Notes

Slide 1

Reflective Writing Unit

Day 1: “Understanding Analysis”

Slide 2

Remember Our Approach

Before you give answers....

...you should ask questions!

Slide 3

Our Approach

• What does it mean to analyze?
  • Break down 1 topic into sub-topics
  • Examine how sub-topics relate to each other
• Why do you analyze?
  • To thoroughly understand a topic
  • Identify what the subject is, what led up to it, why it matters....
• How do you analyze?
  • Build an analytical framework
  • Ask yourself a series of questions of related questions
  • Analytical Framework for Satire:
    • 1.) What is the problem?
    • 2.) How is the author poking fun at the problem w/ literary devices?
    • 3.) What is the message?
Analytical Framework

• What? A series of questions you ask yourself to break down a topic into sub-topics (and to examine how those sub-topics relate to one another)

• Example Analytical Framework (for analyzing a decision):
  • What was the decision made?
  • Why is the decision necessary?
  • What were the other decision options?
  • Why was this option chosen?
  • What are the effects of this decision?
  • Was the decision effective?

Reflective Writing Unit

Day 1: “Understanding Analysis”

Transitions in Academic Writing

• When do I change paragraphs?
  • When you change ideas
  • Each new idea = new paragraph
  • Ex: shifting focus to answer a different, but related, point when answering a question in your analytical framework
  • Ex: shifting focus to answer a different question in your analytical framework

• How do I transition between ideas/paragraphs?
  • Identify the relationship between paragraphs:
    • Cause/Effect
    • Situation/Implication
    • Problem/Solution
    • Chronological (i.e. change in time)
    • Clarifying example, etc.
  • Make that relationship explicit in the topic sentence of your next paragraph
  • Suggestion: use a dependent clause + comma + independent clause
Transitions in Academic Writing

How to Do It

1.) Identify the relationship between paragraphs

2.) Make that relationship explicit in the topic sentence of your new paragraph

3.) Dependent clause (discuss old idea in previous paragraph) + COMMA + independent clause (introduce new idea in current paragraph)

Example

- Since fast fashion companies prioritize profits over ethics, factory employees (the most vulnerable people in this economy) suffer.
- This is a cause/effect relationship.

Old Paragraph:
- Discuss how companies make profits

New Paragraph:
- Describe effect on employees
Appendix C1: Practice Analysis

**Prompt:** Analyze Macbeth’s decision to kill Banquo. First, identify your analytical framework. Then, respond to the prompt. (Remember: don’t write the questions in your response—this should be written as an essay).

**Analytical Framework:** Identify all the questions you would need to answer to fully address the prompt. Identify as many questions as you need; there is no ‘correct’ number of questions if you are thorough!

**Question:**
**Question:**
**Question:**
**Question:**
**Question:**

**Response:** Answer the questions from your analytical framework in a cohesive narrative. Remember: don’t write the questions in your response!
Appendix C2: Peer-Review of Practice Analysis

Partner A: ___________________________________________________________

Partner B: ___________________________________________________________

Directions: Decide who will be partner A and B. Complete two rounds of peer-review & submit this worksheet to the instructor.

Round 1: Partner B reviews partner A’s practice analysis (partner B records responses)
*Note: This should be a constructive and meaningful conversation

1.) Did the analysis answer all the questions in the analytical framework?

2.) Did the analysis combine answers to questions, or address any questions out of order? If so, how/where?

3.) How did the author organize the writing within the analytical framework? How did the author transition between ideas?

4.) How would you describe the organizational structure of this analysis?

5.) Do you think the organizational choices the author made were effective? Why or why not?

Round 2: Partner A reviews partner B’s practice analysis (partner A records responses)
*Note: This should be a constructive and meaningful conversation

1.) Did the analysis answer all the questions in the analytical framework?

2.) Did the analysis combine answers to questions, or address any questions out of order? If so, how/where?

3.) How did the author organize the writing within the analytical framework? How did the author transition between ideas?

4.) How would you describe the organizational structure of this analysis?

5.) Do you think the organizational choices the author made were effective? Why or why not?
# Appendix D1: “Who is to Blame?” Research Paper

**Length:** 7-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1” margins

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Content (Claim &amp; Reasoning)</th>
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<th>Good (8-9)</th>
<th>Average (7-8)</th>
<th>Developing (6 or below)</th>
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<td>The piece:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in one of the following areas:</td>
<td>The piece could improve in two of the following areas:</td>
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<td>__identifies the most important/ blameworthy factor</td>
<td>__identifies the most important/ blameworthy factor</td>
<td>__identifies the most important/ blameworthy factor</td>
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<td>__provides clear reasoning linking the evidence to the</td>
<td>__provides clear reasoning linking the evidence to the</td>
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<td>author’s claim</td>
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<td>of the essay’s thesis</td>
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<th>The piece could improve in one of the following areas:</th>
<th>The piece could improve in two of the following areas:</th>
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<td>__cites evidence from 3-5</td>
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<td>__cites evidence from 3-5 sources</td>
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<td>__paraphrases research &amp;</td>
<td>__paraphrases research &amp;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cites direct quotes</td>
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<td>effectively using MLA format</td>
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<td>effectively using MLA format</td>
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<td>__engages the reader with a creative title &amp; an effective hook</td>
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<td>__provides clear</td>
<td>__provides clear</td>
<td>__provides clear</td>
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<td>transitions between</td>
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<td>ideas &amp; paragraphs</td>
<td>ideas &amp; paragraphs</td>
<td>ideas &amp; paragraphs</td>
</tr>
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<td>__includes an appropriate</td>
<td>__includes an appropriate conclusion that goes beyond restating the initial thesis</td>
<td>__includes an appropriate conclusion that goes beyond restating the initial thesis</td>
<td>__includes an appropriate conclusion that goes beyond restating the initial thesis</td>
<td>__includes an appropriate conclusion that goes beyond restating the initial thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conclusion that goes beyond</td>
<td></td>
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<td>restating the initial thesis</td>
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<th>The piece employs appropriate diction throughout the piece</th>
<th>The piece employs appropriate diction for some of the piece, although some errors occur</th>
<th>Word choice errors begin to impede the clarity of the author’s ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If/where appropriate, the piece uses active voice and demonstrates parallel structure</td>
<td>If/where appropriate, the piece uses active voice and demonstrates parallel structure</td>
<td>These errors may include issues with active voice, lack of parallel structure, incorrect word choice, etc.</td>
<td>These errors may include issues with active voice, lack of parallel structure, incorrect word choice, etc.</td>
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<table>
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<th>Grammar</th>
<th>The piece uses proper grammar &amp; correct sentence structure (commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, etc.) without errors.</th>
<th>The piece uses proper grammar &amp; correct sentence structure (commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, etc.) for most of the piece.</th>
<th>Some grammatical (i.e. capitalization, etc.) and sentence structure (i.e. commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, etc.) errors occur</th>
<th>Errors in grammar begin to impede the clarity of the author’s ideas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Heron 59
Appendix D2: Graphing Academic Writing

RED = High School Writing (5 Paragraph Essay)
GREEN = College Writing (Research/Analytical Writing)

Complexity

START

Time

FINISH

SO WHAT?
Appendix E: Scaffolding for Research Paper

Prompt: Who or what is to blame for... (insert a topic of your choosing)?

Step 1: Brainstorm FIVE (5) topics that interest you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Example</th>
<th>Your Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who or what is to blame for...</td>
<td>Who or what is to blame for...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.) the Eagles’ disappointing season?</td>
<td>1.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) my sons’ constant crying?</td>
<td>2.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) students not reading?</td>
<td>3.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) teen cell phone addiction?</td>
<td>4.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) the increasing threat of global warming?</td>
<td>5.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2: Choose ONE (1) topic to finalize your prompt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Example</th>
<th>Your Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who or what is to blame for students not reading?</td>
<td>Who or what is to blame for...?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Create an analytical framework to organize your thought process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Example</th>
<th>Your Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) What do I mean by reading?</td>
<td>1.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Are students reading? How can I measure this?</td>
<td>2.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Why does it matter if students read? Who or what is affected by this issue?</td>
<td>3.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) Who or what are some of the factors to blame for a lack of student reading? Why are these factors to blame?</td>
<td>4.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Of all the above factors, who or what is most to blame? Why?</td>
<td>5.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) So what? Why does any of this matter?</td>
<td>6.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Peer-Review: Analytical Frameworks

Directions: Decide who will be partner A, B, and C. Complete three rounds of peer-review and submit this form to the teacher when finished.

Round 1: Review of Partner A’s Analytical Framework

- Partners B & C discuss; partner B records responses
- Note: This should be a constructive and meaningful conversation between all partners

1.) Review the entire analytical framework. Infer partner A’s prompt (i.e. Who/what is to blame for...what?)

2.) How would you describe the organizational structure of the analytical framework?

3.) What are the strengths of this analytical framework?

4.) Does the analytical framework include an evolving/so what question--one that would allow the author to unpack the significance of his/her thesis? If so, what is that question?

5.) What opportunities exist for further development? What changes (i.e. additions, deletions, reordering etc.) could we make to the framework to provide clearer, more thorough analysis?

Round 2: Review of Partner B’s Analytical Framework

- Partners A & C discuss; partner C records responses

Round 3: Review of Partner C’s Analytical Framework

- Partners A & B discuss; partner A records responses
Appendix G: Multimodal Reflection 2

Directions: At this point in the writing process, you have constructed an outline to guide your thoughts and research as you seek to analyze an issue. Reflect on what you have learned so far. Consider responding to one or more of the following prompts:

- Has your understanding of analysis changed so far? Why or why not?
- How has your understanding of your chosen topic changed so far?
- Why might this change matter?
- How prepared do you feel to begin researching/writing?
- What excites you about this research paper?
- What about this research paper angers, confuses, and/or frustrates you?
- Choose your own question to guide your reflection

You may respond to this reflection in written form, or else you may make a video (using WeVideo or iMovie) or record a podcast to capture your thoughts. While there is no set length requirement, I am expecting meaningful and thoughtful reflection on the process so far!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Excellent (9-10)</th>
<th>Good (8-9)</th>
<th>Average (7-8)</th>
<th>Developing (7 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reflection masterfully:</td>
<td>The reflection:</td>
<td>The reflection could improve in 1 of the following areas:</td>
<td>The reflection could improve in 2 of the following areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>___ addresses one or more questions</td>
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Total: _______ / 20 pts.
Appendix H: Reflection on First Draft Feedback

Directions: First, reread your essay--and read the teacher comments on your draft. Then, respond to the questions below:

1.) Identify some **positive comments** the teacher made about your draft:

2.) Identify some **suggestions for improvement** the teacher made about your draft:

3.) What do you think is the **most important and/or most helpful** comment the teacher gave?

4.) What comments **confused and/or frustrated** you?

5.) Based on the teacher’s comments, how has your thinking about your topic changed?

6.) Based on the teacher’s comments, what changes do you expect to make to your revised draft?
Appendix Artifact I: Reflective Podcast

**Directions:** At this point in the writing process, you have constructed an analytical framework, written a first draft, and received feedback on both the framework and the first draft. Now, participate in a 5-10-minute reflective podcast where you interview one another (in groups of 4) about the process you’ve engaged in so far—as well as the plans you have for your final draft. You may answer some or all of the following questions, and/or create your own questions:

- How have you analyzed your topic?
- Has your analysis evolved or changed during your research?
- How has your definition of analysis changed during this process?
- How has your understanding of your topic changed as a result of research?
- What role, if any, did the analytical framework play in changing (or not changing) your understanding of the topic?
- When did you see the significance of your thesis? In other words, did you know how you were going to end the paper before you started writing? Describe what this moment looked like:
- What changes will you make to your analytical framework or your essay before submitting the final draft?
- What has excited and/or frustrated you about this process?

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___ addresses one or more questions
___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection
___ shows thoughtful & meaningful insight

The podcast could improve in 2 of the following areas:

___ addresses one or more questions
___ references specific examples (from writing, peer-review, etc.) to support reflection
___ shows thoughtful & meaningful insight

The podcast:

___ meets the appropriate time requirement (5-10 minutes)
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___ includes an appropriate conclusion

The podcast could improve in 1 of the following areas:

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___ includes an appropriate introduction
___ includes an appropriate conclusion

The podcast could improve in 2 of the following areas:

___ meets the appropriate time requirement (5-10 minutes)
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___ includes an appropriate conclusion
Appendix J: Unit Portfolio Table of Contents

Directions: Include the following artifacts in your final unit portfolio submission. Feel free to include any additional artifacts (i.e. multimodal reflections, reflective podcast, notes, etc.) that you believe will demonstrate your understanding of the rhetorical concepts we discussed in class.

1.) Reflective Cover Letter

2.) Original Analytical Framework

3.) First Draft of Essay

4.) Revised Analytical Framework

5.) Final draft of Essay
Appendix K: Reflective Cover Letter

**Prompt:** In a thoughtful and meaningful essay, reflect on this unit. Consider the following questions in your response:

- How has your definition of analysis changed throughout this unit?
- Why does this change in definition matter?
- How can you apply this understanding of analysis in other subjects?
- How have you developed or improved as a writer?
- What about analysis still confuses or frustrates you?
- What, if anything, changed about your writing process during this unit?
- If you had to complete this unit again, what would you do differently?
- What would you do the same?

While these questions are meant to guide you, you do not need to answer all questions, nor do you need to address these questions in any particular order. Please know that I am not “looking” for any one specific answer. If you are uncertain what you learned, explore that uncertainty. There are no right or wrong responses so long as you reflect specifically and meaningfully about your work during this unit.

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Works Cited


From Historical Europe to Contemporary America: Teaching *Daisy Miller* to Sophomores

I. Unit Rationale (The Why)

*Daisy Miller*, like many works of literature, is driven by subtext more than plot. On the surface, very little appears to happen in Henry James' novella. In part one, Winterbourne meets Daisy and the two visit a castle. In part two, Daisy flirts with Giovanelli in Rome before fatally contracting malaria while on a twilight date in The Colosseum. To the modern student, perpetually overstimulated by smartphones and social media, such events may scarcely qualify as plot development, let alone an engaging literary experience. Underneath the surface, however, are invisible forces that can transform a seemingly passive text into a dynamic experience.

The attached unit plan seeks to facilitate that transformation by exploring the role of culture in Henry James' novella. Consequently, this unit recognizes that there are multiple purposes for reading. In the essay "Engendering Gender Equity: Using Literature to Teach and Learn Democracy," Jeraldine Kraver describes two aspects of reading first defined by Louise M. Rosenblatt: the aesthetic and the efferent. When reading for the former, students enjoy a text for its own sake, for the enjoyment that comes from discovering what happens next. When reading for the latter, students "develop a more critical, questioning attitude" that can transfer across contexts, from the historic to the present (67-68). The efferent component of reading
celebrates the connections one can draw between fiction and reality—and codifies those connections into transferable frameworks. Though these components are not mutually exclusive, students are likely to be more familiar with the aesthetic aspect of reading. The unit's instructional activities, therefore, are designed to explain and promote the efferent properties of reading. More specifically, the unit is designed for students to identify cultural practices (in this case, the social conventions of late 19th century Europe), to analyze these practices, and to transfer this skill to a context of their choosing. Properly performed, this unit invites students to draw connections between historical Europe and contemporary America as they analyze the former and then the latter.

II. Unit Methodology (The How)

On day one, the teacher describes the historical context of the novella and introduces students to the analysis they will apply to the text (see Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes). The unit uses semiotic analysis to help students engage in a cultural study of the text. This approach was adapted from high school teacher Shannon Falkner. In the essay "Signs of Life in the High School Classroom: Analyzing Popular Culture to Provide Student Choice in Analytical Writing," Falkner recognizes the need to connect canonical literature to student lives, warning teachers of the broad and superficial observations that come when students fail to connect personally with a text (44). To avoid superficial insight and to foster this much-needed personal connection, students complete a free-write on day 2 of the unit (see Appendix F: Daisy Miller Free-Write #1) asking them to consider either Daisy, Winterbourne, or the novel's setting from a personal perspective. These prompts, adapted from Warren Rosenberg's essay "Making Masculinity Visible: Teaching Daisy Miller at an All-Male College," are designed to elicit both an
"immediate emotional response" as well as "specifics from the story to support their answers" (152). The former purpose addresses Falkner’s concerns about personal connections, while the latter addresses specific standards of learning.

Subsequent activities follow Falkner’s three-part framework where students identify a cultural practice or object, make an argument about it, and reflect on its significance (46). Her third step, reflecting on a sign’s significance, is essential for transitioning student writing from the purely persuasive, where the conclusion merely reaffirms the initial thesis, to the analytical, where authors consider the significance of their argument. Such thinking encourages students to draft conclusions that follow logically from the information presented, something that directly addresses Virginia standard 10.6i. More broadly, completing this analytical framework exposes students to consider multiple perspectives in a text, thereby addressing Virginia standard 10.4e.

To scaffold student participation in semiotic analysis, students first work collaboratively to analyze a familiar cultural object: a student desk (see Appendix C: Practice Semiotic Analysis) before applying this lens independently to Daisy Miller (see Appendix E: Daisy Miller Reading Assignments and Appendix I: Daisy Miller Semiotic Analysis). In this way, the unit uses canonical literature to analyze important topics that connect to current events (see Appendix H: Daisy Miller Free-Write 2). Students learn important analytical skills while reading the text before transferring their learning to a context of their choosing. In the final paper (see Appendix J: Unit Essay, Rubric, and Outline), students apply the same analytical framework they used for Daisy Miller to analyze a cultural object or practice of their choosing.
The element of student choice in the final essay is especially significant as this unit seeks to provide differentiated instruction. In the essay "Deferential Differentiation: What Types of Differentiation Do Students Want?", Lannie Kanevsky argues that student choice must form the foundation of differentiated instruction, writing that such teaching "begin(s) with an awareness of what students want so their preferences can be integrated into their learning" (280). Though there are many ways to acknowledge student preferences, such as product-based differentiation, where students choose how they express their knowledge (i.e. written, oral, or other means), or process-based differentiation, where students choose whether to work collaboratively or independently, this unit utilizes curriculum-based differentiation, where students choose the content they study (Kanevsky 282-83). As this unit was built around argumentative and analytical writing, it was most appropriate to employ a curriculum-based approach where students could choose the subject about which they write (thereby promoting differentiation), while emphasizing common skills (i.e. defending a position, showing relationships among claims, reasons and evidence) assessed by Virginia writing standards 10.6g and 10.6i.

The sixth and final lesson plan occurs after students have finished their first draft, but before they submit a revised draft of the final essay. The lesson promotes peer-editing conferences in groups of 2. In the past, my efforts at promoting effective peer feedback have been mixed at best. While some pairings produced productive conversations, others did not. To this end, Megan Moser notes how many peer-editing sessions focus exclusively on minor revisions like grammar or spelling, while issues with structure or content often go overlooked
“either because the students feared that there may be negative comments from peers, or because they did not have the knowledge to identify the errors” (5).

To focus on higher-order concerns, peer-editing should occur earlier in the writing process, allowing students ample time to revise. To address Virginia Standard of Learning 10.7e, these efforts should be communal and collaborative. To promote such conversations, Nelson and Schunn identify five features of effective peer feedback: summarization, specificity, explanations, scope, and affective language (377). While the peer-editing lesson addresses all five features, there is special emphasis placed on specificity. Citing Ferris, Nelson and Schunn argue that specific comments are more helpful than general ones, and that specificity requires students to identify a problem, explain the issue’s location in the essay, and offer a solution suggesting a method to deal with the problem (378-379). Consequently, the unit’s peer-editing form (see Appendix L) requires students to identify an opportunity for improvement based on the rubric, explain where this occurs in the essay, and offer a suggestion for how to address the concern.

The decision for students to ground their feedback in the teacher-made rubric is significant insofar as it legitimizes the efficacy of peer commentary. In the article “Portal and Gatekeeper: How Peer Feedback Functions in a High School Writing Class,” Valerie Marsh argues that many teachers and students regard their peers’ comments “with less seriousness than scholars do,” noting how such conferences are often used for purposes of “exposure…rather than as a way to support one another or to hone relevant knowledge that could help the group improve how they wrote” (163-164). By grounding comments in the rubric, something which directly affects a student’s grade, my goal is simple: to add weight to
peer comments, helping students regard the activity not merely as an exercise in intellectual exploration but as an intentional way to improve as a writer. This also explains the pedagogical decision for students to begin revising immediately after peer-editing conferences. The timing is intentional: students should receive—and accept—peer feedback that is grounded in a rubric, a rubric that assesses specific state standards.

Like the final essay, this unit's treatment of vocabulary is intentional and research based. The efficacy of vocabulary instruction has been a matter of some debate. In the essay "Why I No Longer Teach Vocabulary," Jerry Heverly discredits the traditional assumption that students must learn vocabulary to understand what they read, arguing that such an approach prioritizes memorization over contextualization (98). Like Heverly, this unit values the role of context in vocabulary acquisition. Accordingly, the six assessed vocabulary words are not needed to read the novel (many do not even appear in the text). Rather, these words are necessary to discuss the novel. In addition to prior knowledge and contextual clues, Heverly argues that vocabulary acquisition requires a "genuine need to know" a specific word (100). This need, moreover, supersedes simply understanding the words on a page; new vocabulary must suit an authentic purpose. To this end, the unit’s vocabulary list (see Appendix B: Unit Vocabulary) is necessary to facilitate an engaging analysis of the text. These terms give students more ways to consider the impact of culture on the novella’s plot and characters. The unit's summative reading assessment (see Appendix K: Daisy Miller Assessment) recognizes the limited efficacy of rote memorization. Accordingly, the questions do not ask students to define vocabulary words but to consider their significance relative to the text. In this way, the unit's assessment recognizes Heverly's point that repeatedly using new words in specific contexts
makes for the most beneficial and effective vocabulary instruction (100). By shifting the emphasis from defining words to applying their definitions in an authentic situation, this assessment more clearly addresses Virginia standard 10.3f, which requires students to extend (not just define) vocabulary across reading, writing, and speaking contexts.

To help students examine the historical culture present in *Daisy Miller*, this unit employs three close-reading strategies adapted from Dr. Rosenwasser and Dr. Stephen of Muhlenberg College. Rosenwasser and Stephen argue that analysis is a natural, if latent, talent that requires explicit teaching and intentional use (41). To this end, they outline three strategies, 10 on 1 observations, strands, and binaries, to help students suspend initial judgements about a topic, identify important parts of a text, and look for patterns of repetition and contrast (43). This unit directly teaches and models those strategies (see Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes) before asking students to apply these strategies to the text (see Appendix E: Daisy Miller Reading Assignments).

That the unit uses these strategies in place of traditional reading comprehension questions is intentional. The purpose for this unit, as evidenced by its title, is for students to make the invisible visible--to identify cultural practices that affect a text, to describe those practices, and to unpack the significance of those practices. Traditional reading questions employ a deductive pedagogical model where the teacher identifies that which is important and leads students to a specific answer. While certainly valuable, reading questions are limited in scope; they prioritize outcome over process. The close-reading strategies previously described employ a more inductive model where students are responsible for determining what is important and for identifying where repetitions and contrasts occur. Consequently, this
unit hopes that students, and not the teacher, are the ones to identify important scenes like Mrs. Walker's reaction to Daisy's behavior, and to recognize contrasts, like how Winterbourne is free to travel but Daisy is not. By teaching strategies instead of assigning questions, this unit seeks to collapse the distance between modern teenager and canonical text, providing students with enduring and transferable skills they can use in current or future contexts.
Daisy Miller Unit Lesson Plans

Unit Overview:

The following lesson plans are designed to be implemented in an English 10 Honors course over six (6) ninety-minute blocks that meet in-person every other day. Though the pacing and rigor of the lessons are suited for sophomores, teachers may find it necessary to adapt certain aspects to meet the unique needs of their individual classes. The unit begins with an overview of the novel’s historical context, an introduction to vocabulary relevant to the novel, and an explanation of semiotic analysis. Subsequent lesson plans ask students to apply this analytical model and various close-reading strategies to examine how the story’s historical culture affects the text’s plot and characters. After discussing cultural attitudes and values within the context of 19th century Europe, students analyze a societal practice or object of their choosing from contemporary culture.

This unit culminates with two major summative assessments: the first (a vocabulary/reading assessment) requires students to apply their learning to *Daisy Miller*. The second (an essay) asks students to apply their analytical skills to contemporary culture. The sixth and final lesson does not immediately follow the fifth; instead, it occurs roughly one week (or 2-3 class periods) after. As the sixth lesson facilitates peer-editing conferences, this delay allows students to compose a first draft of the summative essay. By facilitating an analysis of both historical and contemporary societies, this unit seeks to draw connections between a canonical work of literature and the personal lives of students.

English 10 Course Objective:

This course will enhance your reading and writing expertise, including your grammatical skills, vocabulary usage, and critical thinking abilities. Through assigned readings, essays, and classroom activities, you will learn to analyze information through accurate reading and logical thinking. Moreover, you will learn to organize, document, and present such analysis clearly and precisely.
English 10 Standards:

10.3 The student will apply knowledge of word origins, derivations, and figurative language to extend vocabulary development in authentic texts.
   
   f.) Extend general and cross-curricular vocabulary through speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

10.4 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze literary texts of different cultures and eras.
   
   a.) make inferences and draw conclusions using references from the text for support
   e.) Examine a literary selection from several critical perspectives
   g.) Interpret how themes are connected within and across texts.
   h.) Explain the influence of historical context on the form, style, and point of view of a literary text

10.6 The student will write in a variety of forms to include persuasive, reflective, interpretive, and analytic with an emphasis on persuasion and analysis
   
   g.) clearly state and defend a position using reasons and sufficient evidence as support
   i.) show relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence and include a conclusion that follows logically from the information presented

10.7 The student will self and peer-edit writing for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English
   
   e.) Analyze the writing of others and suggest how writing might be improved
Lesson #1: "Introducing Daisy Miller" (90 minutes)

Objectives:
- Describe the historical context of Daisy Miller
- Define semiotics
- Contrast cultural practices, cultural developments, & cultural objects
- Analyze the significance of a cultural object

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Students read independently (ebook, paper book, or audiobook of choice)

Direct Instruction (20 minutes):
- Teacher explains historical & cultural context of Henry James' Daisy Miller
  - See Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes
- Teacher reviews unit vocabulary
  - See Appendix B: Unit Vocabulary
- Teacher defines semiotics; contrasts cultural practices, developments & objects
  - See Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes

Small-Group Work (15-20 minutes):
- Students work collaboratively (groups of 4-6) to analyze the significance of a cultural object (a student desk)
- Teacher facilitates closing conversation in which students note differences/similarities between each group's semiotic analysis
  - See Appendix C: Practice Semiotic Analysis

Independent Work (30-35 minutes):
- Students complete Day 1 Exit-Ticket
  - See Appendix D: Day 1 Exit-Ticket
- Students begin reading Daisy Miller (Pt. 1 "Les Trois Couronnes")
- Students begin completing Daisy Miller reading assignments
  - See Appendix E: Daisy Miller Reading Assignments

Closure (5 minutes)
- Teacher reviews homework expectations:
  - Students finish reading pt. 1 "Les Trois Couronnes" (p. 1-27) by next class
  - Students complete Daisy Miller reading assignments as appropriate

Assessment

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Lesson #2: "Analyzing Daisy Miller Part 1/3: Les Trois Couronnes" (90 minutes)

Objectives:
- Describe three reading strategies for analyzing text
- Identify themes and important ideas in text
- Cite evidence from text to support inferences and claims about plot and characters

Warm-Up (10 minutes):
- Students read independently (ebook, paper book, or audiobook of choice)

Independent Work: Free-Write (10 minutes):
- Students respond to one of three writing prompts
  - See Appendix F: Daisy Miller Free-Write 1

Whole-Class Discussion (10-15 minutes)
- Teacher facilitates conversation addressing each of the three writing prompts in turn, encouraging students who answered each prompt to share their responses.

Direct Instruction (10-15 minutes)
- Teacher explains reading strategies of 10 on 1 annotations, strands, and binaries
  - See Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes
- Teacher provides examples via "Brooklyn Heights" poem

Independent Work (20-25 minutes)
- Students identify what they think is the most important passage from part 1
- Students apply reading strategies to that passage and explain its significance
  - See Appendix E: Daisy Miller Reading Assignments

Small-Group Work (5-10 minutes)
- Students share their passage and analysis in groups of 4-6

Whole-Class Discussion: (10-20 minutes)
- Teacher facilitates discussion where students share their passages, annotations, and insights with the class

Closure: (5 minutes)
- Teacher reviews homework expectations: read p. 28-51
- Students begin reading the required text

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Lesson #3: "Analyzing Daisy Miller Part 2/3: Rome" (90 minutes)

Objectives:
- Identify the cultural objects & practices of an historical time period
- Explain the significance of cultural objects & practices in a novel
- Cite evidence from text to support a claim

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Students read independently (ebook, paper book, or audiobook of choice)

Small-Group Work (15 minutes):
- Students work collaboratively (groups of 4-6) to share the cultural objects and practices they identified from Daisy Miller
- Students choose ONE (1) cultural object or practice from the text to analyze collectively
  - See Appendix G: Daisy Miller Analysis

Whole-Class Discussion (15-20 minutes):
- Teacher facilitates conversation where groups identify & share their semiotic analyses with the whole class
- Teacher facilitates conversation where class synthesizes discussion of cultural practices & objects to identify 3-5 "rules" regarding the behavior of men and women in 19th century Europe.

Free-Write (15 minutes)
- Students write in response to Daisy Miller free write prompt 2 (see Appendix H)

Small-Group Discussion: (5-10 minutes)
- Students take turns reading their free response to those at their table

Whole-Class Discussion--Value-Line (10-20 minutes):
- Teacher asks students to share their operational definitions of 'equitable' and draws connections between how students defined the term and their answers to the prompt.
- Teacher facilitates conversation where students move to reflect their answer to the free-write prompt. (Ex: if a student said "1", then s/he would stand by the window. If a student said "10," then s/he would stand by the door).
- Teacher asks students with different answers to share their evidence and reasoning.

Closure (5-10 minutes)
- Teacher reviews homework expectations (finish novel p. 51 – 59)
- Students read/finish novel

Assessment

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</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #4: "Analyzing Daisy Miller Part 3/3: Daisy's Death" (90 minutes)

Objectives:
- Cite evidence from text to support claims
- Explain the significance of cultural and historical context in a novel

Warm-Up (15 minutes):
- Students read independently (ebook, paper book, or audiobook of choice)

Free-Write (10 minutes):
- Students respond to writing prompt regarding who or what is to blame for Daisy's death
  - See Appendix I: Daisy Miller Free Write #3

Small-Group Work (5-10 minutes)
- Students take turns reading their responses from free-write in groups of 4-6

Whole-Class Discussion "4 Corners" (15-20 minutes)
- Teacher identifies the 4 corners of the classroom to represent one of the entities in the free-write: A.) Daisy, B.) Winterbourne, C.) Giovanelli, and D.) the novella’s historical culture.
- Teacher directs students to move to the corner that represents the factor they thought was most responsible for Daisy's death.
- Teacher takes turns asking students from different corners to share their responses & reasoning.

Direct Instruction (10-15 minutes):
- Teacher reviews unit essay, rubric, and scaffolding
  - See Appendix J: Unit Essay, Rubric, and Outline

Workshop Time (20-30 minutes):
- Students choose a cultural practice/object/development and begin completing the scaffolding for the essay

Closure (5 minutes):
- Teacher reviews homework expectations:
  - Study for vocabulary/reading assessment next class
  - Make final decision regarding the cultural practice/object they will analyze in final essay
- Students complete exit-ticket describing the topic of their essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student exit-tickets</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #5: "Daisy Miller Assessment/Unit Essay" (90 minutes)

Objectives:
- Define & interpret academic vocabulary
- Identify cultural practices in text and explain their impact on plot, characters

Direct Instruction (10 minutes):
- Teacher reviews essay prompt, rubric, and scaffolding; teacher explains the organizational pattern of the essay and how to complete the essay outline
  - See Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes

Daisy Miller Final Assessment (30-60 minutes):
- Students complete the final *Daisy Miller* assessment independently. Students are encouraged to reference the novel/cite evidence from text in their responses
  - See Appendix K: *Daisy Miller* Assessment

Workshop Time (20--50 minutes):
- After students finish final assessment, they should complete the following:
  - Complete essay outline
  - Complete Day 5 exit-ticket
  - Read independently (book, ebook, or audiobook of student choosing)

Closure (5 minutes):
- Teacher reminds students to complete exit-ticket; explains final due date for cultural analysis essay

### Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student exit-tickets</td>
<td>Review and <em>Daisy Miller</em> Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #6: “Peer Revision for Unit Essay” (90 minutes)

Objectives:
• Describe the grading criteria of an essay
• Identify opportunities for improvement in peers’ writing
• Explain how to address opportunities for improvement in writing

Direct Instruction (10-15 minutes):
• Teacher reviews essay prompt and rubric and addresses student questions; teacher explains expectations for peer-editing conferences

Small-Group Work (20-40 minutes):
• In groups of 2, students participate in peer-editing conferences. In round 1, partner A reads partner B’s essay out loud. Together, students identify something positive the essay does relative to the rubric, as well as an opportunity for improvement. Partner A offers suggestions to help address this opportunity.
• Round 2 is identical to round 1 except the roles are reversed and partner B reads partner A’s essay out loud
• Students submit peer-editing form
  o See Appendix L: Peer-Editing Form

Independent Work (30-50 minutes):
• Students reflect on the feedback they receive and revise their essay accordingly
• Teacher circulates throughout the room addressing student questions

Closure (5 minutes)
• Students complete exit-ticket describing peer feedback & revision efforts

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student peer-editing forms &amp; exit-tickets</td>
<td>Assess student essay (at appointed due date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Unit Plan Notes

Slide 1

Making the Invisible Visible
Henry James’ Daisy Miller

Slide 2

Context: The Author
• Who?
  • Henry James
• When?
  • 1843-1916
• Where?
  • American-born, spent much time in Europe
  • Became a British subject before his death
• What?
  • Grew up wealthy, exposed to high society
  • Fiction was known for its use of point of view,
    interior monologue, and possibly unreliable
    narrative
  • Believed that writers should be allowed
    freedom to present their world view as they
    saw fit

Slide 3

Context: The Book
• When?
  • 1878
• Where?
  • Published in June & July of 1878 in the British
    magazine Cornhill
• What?
  • Centers around an American girl (Daisy Miller)
    and her interactions (and conflict) with
    European society
• Reaction?
  • Instant success
  • Popular in Europe because it (seemed) critical
    of a ‘vulgar’ American
  • Divisive—readers split over support
    for/judgment of titular character
Context: The Time Period

- **When?**
  - 1878
- **Where?**
  - Pt. 1: Vevay (town in Switzerland)
  - Pt. 2: Rome, Italy
- **European Customs:**
  - More conservative than US regarding dating, flirtation, a woman’s role in public society
  - Ex: an unmarried woman is expected to be accompanied by a man, or walk with a man unaccompanied on streets
- **American Conflict vs. European Custom:**
  - Daisy (American) doesn’t know European customs
  - Conflict emerges over what is right & proper—
    and how to enforce these social codes

Semiotic Analysis

- **Semiotics:**
  - Study of “signs”
  - A sign is something—anything—that carries meaning

- **Where do I find signs?**
  - Signs are cultural, meaning they are recognizable to those living in a particular society
  - Signs are both visible and invisible, tangible objects and abstract practices.
  - They occur as cultural practices, cultural developments, and cultural objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Practices</th>
<th>Cultural Developments</th>
<th>Cultural Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Changes or trends that occur in a culture</td>
<td>Single objects that are part of larger cultural practices or developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>More people are reading books electronically OR Vinyl records are making a comeback</td>
<td>iPhones OR Ugg Boots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:
- Watching television as a pastime
- Not leaving a voicemail
Reading Strategy: 10 on 1

• This is about **quantity** vs. **quality**
  
  **Quantity:** say 1 thing about 10 subjects
  • Result: you don’t have time to say anything original, meaningful
  
  **Quality:** say 10 things about 1 subject
  • Result: what interesting or insightful observation will you have after your 8th, 9th, or 10th comment?
  
• What is it?
  • Engage in quality thinking (make 10 comments about 1 subject or passage)
  
• Why do it?
  • Get past boring, superficial observations to make meaningful, engaging insights

---

Reading Strategy: “Strands”

• **What is it?**
  • Identify 4-6 words from a passage that share a connection/common theme relative to the text
  • Explain how those words relate & its significance to the text

• **Why do it?**
  • Recognize importance of author diction
  • Helps you gather evidence from text
  • Encourages you to make inferences beyond literal comprehension

---

Reading Strategy: “Binary”

• **What is it?**
  • Identify 2 words (these can be from the text or from your own mind) that are in opposition to one another
  • Explain how this opposition is related to the text
  • This can be a literal opposition (i.e. black vs. white)
  • OR
  • This can be a practical opposition (i.e. school vs. freedom)

• **Why do it?**
  • Encourages you to make inferences beyond literal comprehension
  • Helps to identify source of tension/conflict in text
Slide 10

**Unit Essay**

- This essay has **THREE (3)** parts:
  - **1.) Introduction**
    - Hook
    - Introduce thesis
  - **2.) Body**
    - Support thesis with evidence & reasoning
  - **3.) Conclusion**
    - Analyze significance of thesis (why does your argument matter?)

- We write to **understand** (think about a topic) and to **argue** (to make a claim).
- These ideas don't always occur in the same order

Slide 11

**Understanding**

- When thinking/understanding, we tend to follow an **inductive** organizational pattern:
  - **1.) Consider evidence**
  - **2.) Arrive at thesis (argument)**

**Arguing**

- When writing/arguing, we must follow a **deductive** organizational pattern:
  - **1.) Make Thesis**
  - **2.) Support thesis w/ evidence**

The Solution? **write out of order!**

Slide 12

**Unit Essay**

- Suggestion: Write in this order
  - **2.) Body**
    - Support thesis with evidence & reasoning
  - **3.) Conclusion**
    - Analyze significance of thesis (why does your argument matter?)
  - **1.) Introduction**
    - Hook
    - Introduce thesis
## Appendix B: Unit Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Example Sentence</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate</td>
<td>Though born in America, Tim was an expatriate; he had been living in London for over a year and hadn’t been back to the US in nearly five years.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>A person who lives outside their native country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquettish</td>
<td>The individual was considered coquettish, always flirting with others.</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Describes someone who flirts; traditionally used in reference to a woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquette</td>
<td>Jake's loud burp at the dinner table violated the fancy party’s strict etiquette—and caused outrage among the guests.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>The customary code of polite behavior among those in a society/group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable</td>
<td>The decision to tear down the hospital was hardly equitable; the only people who benefitted from the decision were the wealthy owners of the hospital itself.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Fair and impartial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostracize</td>
<td>The popular kids ostracized the shy, new student on his first day of school; they left him without a partner in science class and without someone to sit next to at lunch.</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>To exclude someone from a society or group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pariah</td>
<td>After missing the game-winning field goal, the team’s kicker became a pariah; nobody wanted anything to do with him.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>An outcast, someone who doesn’t belong--someone who is ostracized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Practice Semiotic Analysis

Directions: Semiotics is the study of signs. Signs are objects and practices; they are both tangible and abstract. To the analytical thinker, signs offer a window by which to peel back the curtain on the values and beliefs that underpin a society. Let’s practice by analyzing something that we see and use every day: a student desk.

1.) Which description best fits a student desk? (Mark your answer by the appropriate choice)

_____ A.) Cultural Practice
_____ B.) Cultural Development
_____ C.) Cultural Object

2.) Explain your answer to question #1:

3.) Consider the context of a student desk (Evidence/Reasoning):

- With what things can this object be associated?
- How is it different than other models/types/styles?
- Is it part of a pattern? Are there other things like it?

4.) Ask why: why is this object structured/used/built as it is? (Claim)

5.) Reflect on this sign’s significance. What does this object reveal about culture, values, or beliefs? (Analysis of claim)

6.) Based on your answers above, what questions do you have about a student desk—or about anything else that came up in your semiotic study of a student desk? (Opportunities for further study/analysis)
Appendix D: Day 1 Exit-Ticket

1.) Who is the author we are studying?

2.) What is the title of the novella we are reading?

3.) Describe what you remember about the historical context of this novella:

4.) Define the term ‘semiotics’

5.) What’s the difference between a cultural practice and a cultural object?
Appendix E: *Daisy Miller* Reading Assignments

**Directions:** As you read Henry James' *Daisy Miller*, identify the cultural practices and objects--both visible and invisible--that affect the novella’s plot and characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Practice</th>
<th>Cultural Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this row, identify the cultural practice or object in your own words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this row, cite the quote that helped you identify the practice/object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this row, explain how this cultural practice or object influences the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: *Daisy Miller* Reading Assignments (Continued)

**Directions:** Apply the **three** (3) analytical reading strategies we have learned to analyze what you think is the most important section of text from part 1 of *Daisy Miller*.

1.) **Identify** what you think is the most important scene/passage of Part 1. This passage could be as short as a paragraph or as long as a few pages. Record the page(s) where this passage can be found, and describe this passage in your own words:

2.) **Explain why you think** this scene/passage is important:

3.) Complete a "10 on 1" observation of this scene/passage. These observations should be in your own words:

4.) Find a strand from this passage and explain its significance in relation to the text:

   - Strand (4-6 words from the chosen passage of text):

   - Significance to Text:

5.) **Create a binary** about this passage and explain its significance in relation to the text:

   - Binary (This can be a literal or practical binary):

   - Significance to Text:
Appendix F: Daisy Miller Free-Write #1

**Directions:** Choose **ONE (1)** of the following prompts to answer. While there is no right or wrong answer to these questions, I expect you to answer thoughtfully and meaningfully—and to ground your responses by citing evidence from the text.

**Choice A:** Would you want to be friends with Daisy Miller? Explain your answer thoroughly, citing evidence from the text. Finally, consider why your answer matters. What does this say about you, the character, and/or society?

**Choice B:** Would you want to be friends with Winterbourne? Explain your answer thoroughly, citing evidence from the text. Finally, consider why your answer matters. What does this say about you, the character, and/or society?

**Choice C:** Would you want to live in Vevay at the time this story was written? Explain your answer thoroughly, citing evidence from the text. Finally, consider why your answer matters. What does this say about you, the character, and/or society?
Appendix G: *Daisy Miller* Semiotic Analysis

1.) Identify the cultural practice or object from *Daisy Miller* that you wish to discuss:

2.) Consider the **context** of this cultural practice or object *(Evidence/Reasoning)*:

   - With what things can this object be associated?
   - How is it different than other models/types/styles?
   - Is it part of a pattern? Are there other things like it?

3.) Ask why: why is this object structured/used/built as it is? *(Claim)*

4.) Reflect on this sign's significance. What does this object reveal about the novella's historical culture? *(Analysis of claim)*

5.) Based on your answers above, what questions do you have about this cultural practice or object-or about anything else that came up in your analysis? *(Opportunities for further study/analysis)*
Appendix H: Daisy Miller Free-Write #2

**Prompt:** After discussing the various cultural practices and objects in the novel, reflect on the historical customs of upper-class Vevay. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = not at all, 10 = extremely), how equitable is this historical society? Support your answer with specific evidence and clear reasoning. Finally, conclude by explaining how culture influences the story’s plot and characters.

**First,** make a claim and support that claim with specific evidence and clear reasoning.

**Then,** consider why your answer & explanation matter. How does the novel’s culture influence its story or affect its characters?
Appendix I: *Daisy Miller* Free-Write #3

First, consider the circumstances surrounding Daisy Miller's death. Describe how she died (you may want to cite evidence from the text to get the details correct).

Then, rank the following in terms of who or what is most to blame for Daisy's death: Daisy, Winterbourne, Giovanelli, and the novella’s historical culture. For consistency, let's make our ranking scale the following: 1 = MOST TO BLAME; 4 = LEAST TO BLAME

If you don't feel that someone or something holds any blame, then explain your reasoning.

Finally, consider why your ranking is significant. How does your answer affect how the reader should view any of the characters or the setting?
**Appendix J: Unit Essay, Rubric, and Outline**

**Prompt:** Identify, analyze, and evaluate a cultural object or practice of your choosing. You may focus on any area (i.e. social media, entertainment, music, sports, etc.) that you find meaningful and interesting. First, identify and describe this object, practice, or development. Then, analyze its impact. Finally, consider the significance of this impact and what it says about our society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (9-10)</th>
<th>Above Average (8-9)</th>
<th>Average (7-8)</th>
<th>Developing (6 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Argument**              | The essay masterfully:  
___ identifies a cultural practice, object, or development  
___ makes a claim about the impact or effect of said practice, development, or object  
___ provides specific evidence and clear reasoning to support its claim |
|                           | The essay:  
___ identifies a cultural practice, object, or development  
___ makes a claim about the impact or effect of said practice, development, or object  
___ provides specific evidence and clear reasoning to support its claim |
|                           | The essay could improve in 1 or more of the following areas:  
___ identifies a cultural practice, object, or development  
___ makes a claim about the impact or effect of said practice, development, or object  
___ provides specific evidence and clear reasoning to support its claim |
|                           | The essay could improve in 2 or more of the following areas:  
___ identifies a cultural practice, object, or development  
___ makes a claim about the impact or effect of said practice, development, or object  
___ provides specific evidence and clear reasoning to support its claim |
| **Analysis**              | The essay masterfully unpacks the significance of its claim |
|                           | The essay unpacks the significance of its claim |
|                           | The essay begins to unpack the significance of its claim |
|                           | The essay does not unpack the significance of its claim |
| **Organization**          | The essay masterfully:  
___ uses a hook to capture the reader’s attention  
___ includes a thesis or claim in the first paragraph  
___ provides clear transitions between body paragraphs  
___ concludes by analyzing significance of thesis |
|                           | The essay:  
___ uses a hook to capture the reader’s attention  
___ includes a thesis or claim in the first paragraph  
___ provides clear transitions between body paragraphs  
___ concludes by analyzing significance of thesis |
|                           | The essay could improve in 1 or more of the following categories:  
___ uses a hook to capture the reader’s attention  
___ includes a thesis or claim in the first paragraph  
___ provides clear transitions between body paragraphs  
___ concludes by analyzing significance of thesis |
|                           | The essay could improve in 2 or more of the following categories:  
___ uses a hook to capture the reader’s attention  
___ includes a thesis or claim in the first paragraph  
___ provides clear transitions between body paragraphs  
___ concludes by analyzing significance of thesis |
| **Word Choice**           | The piece employs clear, concise, and correct diction throughout the piece, creating a distinct & engaging voice |
|                           | The piece employs correct diction throughout the piece |
|                           | The piece employs appropriate diction for some of the piece, although some errors occur |
|                           | Word choice errors begin to impede the clarity of the author's ideas |
| **Grammar**              | The piece uses proper grammar that benefits the essay’s voice |
|                           | The piece uses proper grammar |
|                           | The piece demonstrates proper grammar for some of the piece, although some errors occur |
|                           | Errors in grammar begin to impede the clarity of the author’s ideas |
Appendix J: Unit Essay, Rubric, and Outline (Continued)

1.) Introduction: Introduction of Argument (*Suggestion: complete this second!*)

- **Hook** (How will you capture the audience's attention?):

- **Thesis** (What is your argument about the cultural object, development, or practice?):

2.) Body: Support of Argument (*Suggestion: complete this first!*)

Identify the cultural practice, object, or development you wish to discuss:

Consider the **context** of this cultural practice/object/development. What is it? What is it like? What does it do? Who does it affect? Here, you are describing facts.

- With what things can this object/practice/development be associated?

- Is it part of a pattern? Are there other things like it?

3.) Conclusion: Analysis of Argument (*Suggestion: complete this last!*)

- What argument are you making about this cultural practice/development/object?

- Why does your argument matter? What does it say about our culture?

- Based on your answers above, what questions do you have about your topic? What are you still curious about?
Appendix K: Daisy Miller Assessment

Part 1 Vocabulary: Answer the following questions in COMPLETE SENTENCES

1.) First, explain why Winterbourne can be considered an expatriate. Then, identify one reason why this matters to the story: (3 pts.)

2.) Do you believe it's fair to describe Daisy as coquettish? Explain your reasoning: (4 pts.)

3.) Consider the social etiquette of Vevay and Europe. How equitable is this historical culture? Explain your answer: (4 pts.)

4.) Explain how Daisy is ostracized and how she becomes a pariah. Then, identify at least one reason why this matters to the story: (4 pts.)

Part 2 Cultural Analysis: Review the prompt and rubric below; answer in complete sentences

Identify a cultural practice in Daisy Miller (you may reference your notes). Explain what this practice is, citing evidence from the text. Make an argument about this cultural practice—and explain the significance of your argument (i.e. why it matters).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Cultural Practice</th>
<th>Great (5)</th>
<th>Good (4-5)</th>
<th>Average (3.5–4)</th>
<th>Developing (3.5 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The response masterfully:</td>
<td>The response: ___ describes a cultural practice from the text ___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td>The response could improve in 1 area: ___ describes a cultural practice from the text ___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td>The response could improve in 2 areas: ___ describes a cultural practice from the text ___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ describes a cultural practice from the text</td>
<td>___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td>___ describes a cultural practice from the text</td>
<td>___ describes a cultural practice from the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td>___ describes a cultural practice from the text</td>
<td>___ cites evidence from the text</td>
<td>___ describes a cultural practice from the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Great (5)</th>
<th>Good (4-5)</th>
<th>Average (3.5–4)</th>
<th>Developing (3.5 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The response masterfully:</td>
<td>The response: ___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice ___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>The response could improve in 1 area: ___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice ___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>The response could improve in 2 areas: ___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice ___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice</td>
<td>___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice</td>
<td>___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>___ makes an arguable claim about the cultural practice</td>
<td>___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>___ supports the argument with evidence &amp; reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Great (5)</th>
<th>Good (4-5)</th>
<th>Average (3.5–4)</th>
<th>Developing (3.5 or below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The response masterfully considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response begins to consider the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response does not consider the significance of its argument; it does not explain why the argument matters or how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The response considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response begins to consider the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response does not consider the significance of its argument; it does not explain why the argument matters or how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The response considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response considers the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response begins to consider the significance of its argument, explaining why the argument matters/how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td>The response does not consider the significance of its argument; it does not explain why the argument matters or how it affects one’s interpretation of the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Peer-Review Form

First, review the rubric for the final essay. For our peer revisions today, only focus on the argument, analysis, or organization components of the rubric:

Round 1: Partner A reads partner B’s essay out loud. Together, partner A and B discuss these questions. Partner B answers these questions in writing.

1.) Based on the rubric, what does this essay do well? Why?

2.) Based on the rubric, what’s an opportunity for improvement? Identify this opportunity using the language of the rubric.

3.) Where in the essay does this opportunity occur?

4.) Why should this aspect of the essay be improved?

5.) What can be done to address this opportunity for improvement? Where in the essay would these revisions occur?

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Round 2: Partner B reads partner A’s essay out loud. Together, partner A and B discuss these questions. Partner A answers these questions in writing.

6.) Based on the rubric, what does this essay do well? Why?

7.) Based on the rubric, what’s an opportunity for improvement? Identify this opportunity using the language of the rubric.

8.) Where in the essay does this opportunity occur?

9.) Why should this aspect of the essay be improved?

10.) What can be done to address this opportunity for improvement? Where in the essay would these revisions occur?
Heron 103

Works Cited


*Approaches to Teaching Henry James’s Daisy Miller and The Turn of the Screw*, edited by Reed, Kimberly Capps., and Peter G. Beidler, 2005, pp. 151-156.

An Imperfect, If Necessary, Start:

Efforts to Measure and Define Effectiveness in High School Writing Tutorials

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I. Introduction

This is a project that began out of confusion. As a new writing center director at a public high school, there are many important responsibilities to which I must attend. While a robust literature debates the best training curriculums (Bickford, 2006; Stueart, 2012; Geib, 2017) and discusses the most effective faculty outreach initiatives (Caswell et. al, 2016), there is limited scholarship about assessing the effectiveness of writing tutorials. The relative silence on this topic has confused me as a director and intrigued me as an academic. While attending a regional conference for high school writing centers, I asked other directors to share their methods for institutional assessment. Their responses were similar in nature, reflecting the same metrics (i.e. tracking the number of sessions completed, analyzing client feedback surveys, etc.) that my own center employed. More troubling than the lack of variety, however, was the potential inadequacy of these metrics for assessing tutoring effectiveness. Consequently, their responses further piqued my curiosity in the topic.

There is, perhaps, a logical explanation for the lack of variety in writing center assessment. No piece of writing center scholarship has so profoundly influenced its pedagogical practices more than Stephen North’s “The Idea of a Writing Center” (Boquet and Lerner, 2008, p. 170). Reviewing citational patterns from The Writing Center Journal, Lerner (2014) notes how the article appears in the works cited of nearly a third of all published pieces in the journal (p. 68). The most cited line from this essay, moreover, is North’s (1984) famous, if somewhat vague, axiom that “we aim to make better writers, not necessarily...better texts” (p. 441). This belief has permeated the language, philosophy, and mission statements of writing centers.

Consider the following claim offered by the writing center at a public university in Pennsylvania:
the institution promises to “help students find strategies for solving writing problems and help them become better writers” (Ashley and Shafer, 2006, p. 83). While the influence of North is evident, his language poses troubling implications for institutional assessment. How can directors or tutors know if a tutee has become a better writer? How can the tutee know this? Are writers not ultimately judged by the quality of writing they produce? As this essay seeks to demonstrate, there is a tension between writing center philosophy and empirical institutional assessment.

The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to provide a framework for more accurately assessing the effectiveness of high school writing centers. Rather than ask *are we making students better writers*, this essay poses two alternative questions by which to evaluate writing tutorials: 1.) *what are the objectives created during tutoring sessions?* and 2.) *are these objectives measurable?* By analyzing qualitative data taken from transcripts of writing conferences, this essay will make recommendations regarding how to define and how to construct measurable objectives that can assess tutorial effectiveness. While future studies may evaluate the progress made in a session toward achieving the objective, this project will focus exclusively on the construction of tutorial objectives. Consequently, this essay seeks to provide an initial framework for more accurately evaluating the effectiveness of high school writing tutorials.

II. Literature Review

Given the complex and highly contextual factors associated with academic writing, there has been considerable debate among composition instructors over the best approach to assessment. Surveying shifting trends in writing instruction, Anson (2012) notes the recent
pedagogical shift away from the product-based instruction of the current-traditional paradigm and toward a more growth-centered philosophy associated with a process-oriented model (p. 215). Indicative of this shift are the following pedagogical principles: emphasizing student growth across multiple drafts, relegating grammatical concerns to the end of the process, and encouraging flexibility with respect to genre-specific rules and formats (p. 217). To address the complexities of a process-model of composition instruction (i.e. tracking changes across drafts, increasing the frequency and specificity of teacher feedback, using portfolios to measure student growth, etc.), writing centers have become an increasingly common resource at the high school level (Kent, 2006). While much scholarship at the secondary level addresses the creation and benefits of writing centers (see Greer & Trofimoff, 2013; Mulqueen, 2015; Saidy & Early, 2016), there is a lack of clarity about how to assess the effectiveness of established institutions.

This research gap reflects an institutional emphasis on the affective and intangible benefits of peer tutoring, a point which necessarily complicates assessment efforts. Echoing North’s call to focus on writers and not their writing, Tobin (2010) joins Peggy Silva, Peter Elbow and others in praising writing centers for not grading student work, arguing that tutorial dialogues “enable students to focus on writing as a process in a creative, supportive environment” (p. 230). The emphasis on process—on the participatory experience writing centers provide—is crucial to understanding writing center theory. To this end, Jordan (2006) argues that “the supportive environment of a writing center encourages students to push themselves as writers and develop confidence in their abilities” (p. 53). Similarly, Kent (2006) praises writing centers for “developing social networks [and] engaging in civic discourse” (p.
When justifying the creation of writing centers to administration, Greer and Trofimoff (2013) highlight the “soft skills” acquired by tutoring, such as careful observation, patience, initiative, the ability to work in teams, and open-mindedness (p. 22). While this essay does not discredit the merits of pushing oneself as a writer, engaging in civic discourse, or acquiring soft skills, it does emphasize the difficulty these activities pose with respect to assessment.

The literature for collegiate writing centers reveals a similar gap with respect to assessment, albeit with a greater professional awareness regarding the limitations of current scholarship. In a comprehensive review of writing center assessment, Gofine (2012) notes how the few quantitative metrics writing centers provide offer only “basic descriptive statistics” such as reporting the number of writing tutorials or discussing data from student feedback surveys (p. 43). Yet the reliability of these statistical metrics, especially data taken from client exit-surveys, has itself come under scrutiny. For instance, Hedengren and Lockerd (2017) determined that 99% of client feedback at the University of Texas at Austin could be classified as positive (p. 132). While not impugning the quality of tutoring at their institution, Hedengren and Lockerd conceded that the overwhelmingly positive feedback raised significant concerns about the data’s validity (p. 133). The issue of unreliable exit surveys is not unique to the University of Texas--or even to large, publicly funded universities. To this end, Bromley, Northway and Schonberg (2013) identified a similarly positive trend among exit surveys across multiple institutions of varying sizes and institutional statuses. Although the limited size of the above research (i.e. five institutions) may not allow for sweeping generalizations nationwide, it begins to identify some commonalities across campuses.
Accounting for the overwhelmingly positive feedback of client exit-surveys, Bredtmann, Crede, and Otten (2013) argue that students may lack the ability to assess their own understanding of course material. Concerns about teacher feedback, and a transactional view of the writing center as a vehicle for improving one’s grade, may contribute to students’ lack of metacognitive awareness. To this end, Morrison and Nadeau (2003) found that students often altered their initial perception of a writing center visit after receiving a grade on their assignment. If students complete exit-surveys immediately after a session, and if they view their visit as something that can benefit their grade, this may explain the overwhelmingly positive trend found in exit-surveys. Moreover, as a student’s grade is beyond the locus of a writing center’s control, these findings emphasize the practical limitations of exit-surveys when assessing writing center effectiveness.

The limitations of client exit surveys pose a challenge for writing centers when measuring their own effectiveness (Thompson, 2006, 34). Efforts to apply outcome-based assessments merely underscore this challenge. To this end, Bell and Frost (2012) conducted such a study at a mid-size university with the hypothesis that attending the writing center would result in higher retention and graduation rates. While their findings did show a higher retention rate between semesters among students who attended the writing center, the results showed negligible improvement with respect to overall graduation rates (p. 23). Yet as Bell and Frost noted, there are several limitations regarding such a study, including, most pressingly, issues with determining the influence writing tutorials have among a litany of factors (i.e. financial concerns, birth of a child, death of a loved one, mental health, etc.) that can influence a student’s academic performance. Besides uncertainty regarding the impact of a session, such
analyses require “a careful research design in advance of the study” (Bredtmann, Crede, & Otten, 2013, p. 123). It may be unrealistic, if not inappropriate, to expect directors of high school writing centers, many of whom are English teachers, to possess this statistical expertise.

Since the purpose of this essay is to extend scholarship and encourage other high school directors to produce their own research, tying the efficacy of the writing center to student grades or graduation rates falls outside the scope of this project.

There is another reason to better assess writing center tutorials: to improve the emotional well-being of the tutors staffing these institutions. Apart from the troubling implications with assessment, North’s vision has prioritized higher-order concerns like ideas and content over lower-order concerns like grammar and mechanics (Jacobs, 2018). While such an approach may work well for established writers, Salem (2016) found that traditionally underachieving student populations (i.e. minority students, ELL students, etc.) are more likely to visit the writing center than their more privileged peers. These populations, moreover, may not always benefit from such nondirective approaches, a point which can lead to confusion and frustration between tutor and tutee (Salem, 2016; Jacobs, 2018; Nicklay, 2012). Conflicting expectations between client need and tutor training may create feelings of guilt among tutors who struggle to reconcile the reality of client needs with the theory by which they were trained (Nicklay, 2012).

III. Research Proposal

Given the potential limitations when generalizing forthcoming research, it may be useful to first describe the environment in which my writing center operates. I work at a public high school in Virginia with an enrollment of roughly 2,500 students. The school's demographics
reflect its surrounding community. Student enrollment is 38% White, 38% Asian, 9% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 6% multiracial. Roughly 11% of the school receives free or reduced lunch, while 8% of the school is classified as ELL. Approximately 9% of students have been found eligible for special education services. The school reports a 96% graduation rate, and most graduating seniors attend higher education, either at a community college or at a four-year institution.

Regarding the writing center itself, I have 46 tutors enrolled in two sections of the unweighted English elective called writing center, a year-long course for which students receive academic credit. Enrollment in the course is dependent on two factors: 1.) a recommendation from a current or former English teacher and 2.) availability in a student’s schedule. Students received approximately four weeks of training before the center officially opened. Tutor training included theoretical, practical, and logistical components. Students read and discussed articles about writing center theory (including works by Stephen North, Jeff Brooks, and Rose Jacobs). To simulate a diverse range of tutoring contexts, students participated in three practice tutoring sessions at various stages of the writing process: first with no draft, then with a rough draft, and finally with a more polished essay to discuss. In each of these practice contexts, students shared and discussed their own writing, participating in these sessions as both tutors and tutees and working with a new partner each session. Students reflected on each of these experiences in writing assignments and in ongoing class discussions. Lastly, student-tutors also attended to the logistical concerns of opening a writing center, drafting a social media plan, writing a tutor code of conduct, designing faculty outreach initiatives, etc. Hardly exhaustive,
these initial training exercises were supplemented by various professional development readings and activities throughout the year.

During the first quarter of operation, my writing center conducted 406 tutoring sessions, most of which occurred as drop-in appointments during lunch. In these sessions, tutors did not typically know their tutees before starting a session. Most of these lunch sessions lasted between 20-30 minutes. 39 sessions occurred during study hall and lasted between 30 minutes to one hour. Reflecting the evidence presented in the literature review, my writing center struggled to acquire reliable data from tutee satisfaction surveys. Of the 279 responses to our client exit survey, 69.9% of clients (193 respondents) indicated the highest possible satisfaction rating for a tutoring session, meaning they marked their experience as being a 10 out of 10. Moreover, the lowest recorded ranking was a 6 out of 10, and only 1.1% of respondents (3 out of 279) provided such an evaluation.

Rather than tie institutional assessment to client feedback surveys, which may lack reliability, or to student grades, where the impact of a tutorial is diffused across a host of factors, this project assesses writing center effectiveness by analyzing the measurability of tutoring objectives. Data is therefore qualitative in nature, the results coming from an analysis of session transcripts. Not only is this method more accessible to high school teachers in terms of the statistical proficiency it requires, but it is more likely to yield reliable results, as the locus of control rests not with student perception or with a final grade but with the progress made in the session itself. Moreover, case studies can directly reveal the types of questions and strategies that promote student understanding and growth within a session. While the highly situational nature of case studies does present challenges when generalizing findings to other
in institutional contexts, these case studies provide an imperfect, if necessary, framework toward measuring the effectiveness of secondary school writing centers.

Having described the environment in which my writing center operates, this project will now review the proposed research. During every writing conference, tutors complete a session report where they document important information about the tutorial. (See Appendix A: “Tutoring Session Report”). While the session report captures relevant information about a client (i.e. name, grade, essay prompt, etc.), the document also requires tutors to construct an objective for the session. The purpose of an objective is to focus a writing tutorial, to identify and address a specific component of the client’s writing. These objectives are negotiated between client and tutor, the latter constructing the objective to reflect the questions or concerns of the former. Since tutorial objectives vary across sessions, they reflect the highly contextual nature of personalized writing conferences more accurately than a uniform exit-survey. Unlike outcome-based assessments, where the direct impact of a tutorial is diffused across a variety of factors, the use of objectives for evaluating tutorial success recognizes the unique context in which a writing conference occurs. In a 20-30-minute session, where tutor and client must get to know each other, review a prompt, read and then discuss an essay, there is not enough time to consider all aspects of a student’s writing. While teacher feedback is often holistic in nature, assessing multiple compositional dimensions (i.e. content, organization, word choice, grammar, etc.), writing conferences are not always holistic. Consequently, tutorial objectives represent a more accurate, reliable, and appropriate metric for evaluating writing center effectiveness.
Considering the importance of tutorial objectives, therefore, it is essential that these goals be measurable. After transcribing a session, tutors will evaluate the measurability of the objective they created by completing a four-question checklist (see Appendix B: “Assessing Tutorial Objectives”). The checklist requires tutors to consider 1.) Was a specific objective or purpose for the session identified? 2.) Did that objective contain a specific skill or concept? (i.e. presence of a thesis statement, avoidance of run-on sentences, correct use of in-text citations, etc.) 3.) Could this specific skill or concept be readily identified within a specific sentence or paragraph? 4.) Could this specific skill or concept be identified, affirmed, or improved within a session? If the tutor answers all four questions in the affirmative, then the objective is deemed measurable and appropriate for determining the effectiveness of a session. Per the educational privacy guaranteed by FERPA, tutors will request written permission from tutees before recording all sessions, and the names of all participants will be omitted to protect student privacy. The hypothesis for this research is that 75% of tutoring sessions will include measurable objectives, while subsequent endeavors will measure the progress of tutees toward achieving the stated objective in a session.

IV. Discussion

This research carries many important pedagogical benefits. In addition to more accurately assessing writing center effectiveness, constructing measurable tutoring objectives models the metacognitive language students need to better understand and discuss their own writing. When observing writing conferences, I was troubled by the types of questions tutees asked their tutors, the most common of which were: do you think the paper is any good? Will I get an A? Did I write the paper correctly? Abstract qualifications like ‘good’ or ‘correct’ serve as
placeholders for describing the specific components of effective writing. These components, moreover, vary by genre; what constitutes a ‘good’ fiction story varies from what defines a ‘good’ argumentative essay. Tutee reliance on placeholders like ‘good’ or ‘correct’ suggested an inability to define effective writing in a given context.

Should a tutor establish a vague objective of ‘determining if an essay is good,’ then the dialogical benefits of peer-tutoring are minimized insofar as the tutee is relegated to that of a listener patiently awaiting the tutor’s judgment. When constructing measurable objectives, however, tutors must identify a specific goal or purpose for the session. By doing so, tutors and clients invariably discuss and name the components which determine an essay’s goodness. This has the ancillary benefit of increasing the likelihood that clients will transfer skills discussed in a tutoring session to other contexts. To this end, Roozen (2016) attributes issues of transfer to difficulties accessing “tacit writing-related knowledge, abilities, and dispositions” (p. 250). As Neal (2016) argues, this knowledge remains tacit so long as students lack the vocabulary for discussing and assessing their own writing (p. 71). Constructing measurable objectives requires tutors and clients to name the skills that define good writing, thereby providing clients with the vocabulary they need to transfer writing skills across contexts.

Fostering this metacognitive vocabulary is especially important to leverage the limited time available in tutoring sessions. When observing early writing conferences, I noticed that many tutors began a session by reading the client’s paper out loud. While there are pedagogical benefits to students hearing their writing read aloud (Mackiewicz and Thompson, 2018; Thompson and Mackiewicz, 2014), doing so without an objective reduces the time spent revising a draft. Without an established purpose, tutors would often refrain from asking
questions or making comments when reading. Clients would remain similarly quiet, if not somewhat disinterested—assuming the reading of the paper was for the tutor’s benefit and not their own. This lack of discussion limited the effectiveness of initial readings, reducing the actual time spent discussing and revising the draft.

Constructing measurable objectives can also improve how writing centers support ELL students. Rose Jacobs (2018) and others have argued that the nondirective pedagogy of writing centers may not always align with client needs. At my writing center, tutors do not typically know clients personally before beginning a session. Creating an objective helps tutors learn more about their clients’ attitudes toward, and feelings about, writing. Moreover, objectives shift the tutorial emphasis from what a session covers to how that topic is assessed. Measurability becomes the defining feature of a valid objective, not the content it assesses. Such an approach can help tutors recognize the value in addressing all client concerns, whether they reflect issues of grammar or content. Moreover, as Show (2015) illuminates, issues of word choice are often more complex than they initially appear, reflecting a cultural knowledge of tone and structure that ELL students often lack (pp. 244-245). By requiring my tutors to record sessions and analyze objectives, they will become proficient at utilizing a tutoring heuristic that more accurately assesses tutorial effectiveness, that better leverages time during a session, and that better accommodates the unique needs of a diverse clientele.

It should be noted, however, that the coding described in this essay is subject to certain limitations. Writing is a subjective performance dependent on a variety of situational factors. In labeling an objective measurable, this essay does not refute claims that measurability is itself subjective. For example, while determining if an author uses multiple arguments to defend a
thesis is measurable insofar as one can count multiple reasons, it is subjective in determining what constitutes an effective argument. Rather than claim absolute objectivity, this essay situates objectivity on a continuum, recognizing the subtleties and variations that inevitably come into play. By moving along the continuum toward (relatively) measurable objectives as defined by the checklist in Appendix B, this project anticipates more effective, productive, and harmonious conferences between tutors and tutees.

The research presented in this essay is an imperfect, if necessary, start toward more effectively assessing high school writing centers. We, as directors, must broaden our means of assessment to better account for the quality of conferencing that our tutors provide. To this end, further research is needed to clarify what constitutes adequate progress toward a measurable objective. Additional research is also needed to determine the types of questions and strategies that can assist clients in meeting tutorial objectives. By sharing these results and encouraging these conversations, I hope to better assess and ultimately improve the services provided by secondary school writing centers.

While I considered submitting this article to The High School Journal, I now feel it is most appropriate for The Writing Center Journal. For one, this essay is about writing centers, and The Writing Center Journal, based in Norman, Oklahoma, is perhaps the flagship publication for writing center scholarship. Many of the scholars I cite (i.e. North, Lerner, Kent) are key voices in writing center discourse, and most of the articles I reference were published in The Writing Center Journal.

Furthermore, the topic of institutional assessment (i.e. how do we gauge the effectiveness of writing centers) is of pressing concern in the data-driven, accountability-
oriented age of modern universities. Increasingly, writing center directors are being asked to measure their impact to a school’s community via empirical methods. Given the inherent subjectivity of writing, many directors are struggling to measure their institution’s effectiveness. This essay addresses a gap in current assessment practices by adding ‘efficacy of tutoring sessions’ alongside more traditional metrics like documenting the number of tutoring sessions or evaluating data from client feedback surveys.

Finally, although most submissions to *The Writing Center Journal* come from collegiate settings, I believe it is important to consider the practices of secondary school writing centers. Not only are high school writing tutors most likely to become collegiate writing tutors, but their services provide students with a first impression of writing centers. Given how important first impressions are in a student’s decision to return to the writing center, it is arguable that the success of high school writing centers is critical to the success of collegiate writing centers. If the student body leaves high school with a positive perception of writing centers, they are more likely to patronize collegiate writing centers. Thus, this essay addresses an important niche (i.e. defining institutional assessment) in a seldom researched setting (i.e. high school writing centers). Because of these factors, I am submitting this essay for consideration in *The Writing Center Journal*.
Appendix A: Tutoring Session Report

-Client Name (First & Last): ____________________________________________________________

-Grade (Circle One): 9  10  11  12

-Teacher: _________________________________________________________________________

-Subject (Select One):

  _____ English
  _____ History
  _____ Science
  _____ Math
  _____ Business/CTE
  _____ Fine Arts/Theatre/Music
  _____ Health/PE

-Has the client visited the writing center before?  _____ YES  _____ NO

-Did the client visit by choice or requirement?  _____ CHOICE  _____ REQUIREMENT

-Describe the prompt:

-Reason for Visit (check all that apply):

  _____ Idea & Content  _____ Grammar
  _____ Organization  _____ Unsatisfactory Grade
  _____ Citations (APA, MLA format, etc.)  _____ Teacher Referral/Requirement
  _____ Other:

_________________________________________________________________________________

-What is the objective for this tutoring session?

_________________________________________________________________________________
-Genre:

- Creative Fiction  - Research Paper
- Personal Narrative       - Science Lab Report
- Reader Response/Literary Analysis - Argumentative/Persuasive
- Business Letter          - History Paper (DBQ, etc.)
- Poetry                   - Other: ________________

-Stage in the Writing Process:

- Pre-writing (no draft)
- Drafting (client did not receive a grade from the teacher)
- Revising (client already received a grade from teacher)

-Description of Session: (Describe what was discussed. Was the agenda/objective met? Why or why not?)

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Length of Session               Block

- 5-10 Minutes                   - 3rd Block
- 10-15 Minutes                  - 7th Block
- 15-30 Minutes                  - Study Hall
- 30 Minutes or more

Tutor Name:

______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B: Tutoring Objective Evaluation

What was the objective for the session?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

1.) Was a specific objective or purpose for the session identified? YES  NO

Explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2.) Did that objective contain a specific skill or concept? (i.e. presence of a thesis statement, avoidance of run-on sentences, correct use of in-text citations, etc.) YES  NO

Explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3.) Could this specific skill or concept be readily identified within a specific sentence or paragraph? YES  NO

Explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4.) Could this specific skill or concept actually be affirmed, changed, or improved within a session? YES  NO

Explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
References


Stueart, K. C. (2012). A proposal for a writing center and a peer tutor training course at fayetteville high school

