

# Writing Essentials Lesson Planning and Teaching

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Isolation ? The Enemy of Improvement. - Mike Schmoker

Writing Essentials Lesson Planning and Teaching (EDU 320/520) Essential Question ? What is the role of good colleagues in my teaching life?

Backward Design Lesson Planning:

Why is this learning experience important (i.e. What's the point?)?

- (1) For you to organize one lesson of a writing workshop to engage your classmates productively in the learning process,
- (2) For you to establish a purpose and audience for the workshop; to give your classmates choices of writing topic; to think aloud and write as you demonstrate for them; to make the reading/writing connection,
- (3) For you to collaborate and negotiate with your classmates to learn life skills and about group work so that you might realistically use it in your own classroom,
- (4) For you to experience the value of learning with others, being creative, and the sustaining energy of good colleagues, and
- (5) To address Maine's Standards One, Three, Four, and Six for Initial Certification.

Standard One - Demonstrates knowledge of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students.

Standard Three - Demonstrates knowledge of the diverse ways in which students learn and develop by providing learning opportunities that support their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

Standard Four - Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, and curriculum goals.

Standard Six - Creates and maintains a classroom environment which supports and encourages learning.

What will you know or be able to do or demonstrate when you are done? You will demonstrate your competence in teaching a writing workshop lesson based in your understanding of writing in Writing Essentials.

How will I know that (i.e. assessment)? See rubric on page four.

A successful face-to-face team is more than just collectively intelligent. It makes everyone work harder, think smarter, and reach better conclusions than they would have on their own. ? James Surowiecki

Guidelines: When you take a position in the public schools, it is necessary that you develop the ability to work with others, including those who have different learning styles and personalities than yourself. In the public schools, you will be asked to be on various committees and will be assigned to work with a grade level or team of teachers, the composition of which you have no choice. For this assignment, my hope is that you enjoy the people you work with and pull your own weight. In my experience with this assignment, most groups work together famously. They learn and are supported by each other. If you are one who often gets her/his own way, consider how you can collaborate so all viewpoints are heard.

One strategy to complete this ?committee work? is to use Stephen Covey's The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People as a guide. (Some of which are used in the Appendix B rubric)

1. As you meet with your group to plan, seek first to understand what others are thinking and then be sure that you are understood.
2. Don't sit back nor dominate the conversation.
3. Be proactively involved in the project as you do your part and collaborate with your classmates.
4. Seek to be democratic in your decision-making throughout your collaboration.
5. Think win/win as you include each other's thinking to create an engaging lesson for your classmates that is better than anything one of you have might have created on your own.
6. Once the conversation has begun, create a plan with the end in mind. What do you want your classmates to know and be able to demonstrate at the end of the workshop?
7. Then begin with what needs to be done first.

In small groups, lead a 40-45 minute writing workshop lesson based in your reading and understanding of Writing Essentials. Choose a grade level to focus on. Your classmates will play the role of students at that grade level. You may select from:

1. Tried and True Ideas for Shared Writing (pp. 112-114)
2. Genre Characteristics (p. A-13 in the Appendix)

You may recreate a variation of other ideas from Writing Essentials. If you do select one of these ideas, choose one you want to learn more about, not one with which you are comfortable.

1. Fiction Story writing (p. 99)
2. Informational writing (p. 105)

3. Class newspaper (p. 114)
4. Summary writing (pp. 128)
5. Secrets of second graders (p. 292)
6. Heart poems (p. 305)
7. Procedural writing (p. 316)
8. Hero writing (p. 323)
9. Persuasive writing (p. 330)

You certainly may choose your own topic.

Include these elements in your writing workshop:

1. Focus
2. Purpose
3. audience
4. Reading/writing connection. Include some reading that connects with your writing lesson.
5. Think aloud/write aloud composing with your classmates (modeling) or shared writing (Chapter 5 in Writing Essentials) as a model before students write individually
6. Time to write
7. Time to share in pairs/small groups

Optional

1. mini-lesson
2. conference time
3. publishing

Create a one-page handout for your classmates of key elements from the above list. The handout should include a quote from Writing Essentials. At the bottom, put all the group members' names as well as the copyright symbol. (? First and last name year, e.g. ? Susan Collins 2006)

Create an Essential Question. Characteristics of Essential Questions:

- They go to the heart of the subject.
- They are doorways to exploring big ideas.
- They do not have one answer.
- They are debatable.
- They are questions that can be revisited again and again.
- They are rich, engaging, and provocative.
- They pose dilemmas.
- They raise other questions.

Update - After the second of your three class work times, send me electronically by Word attachment one update of your progress as a group by March 4th will give you formative assessment (in process feedback) on your efforts to date and send back an electronic response to all of you. In this one to two page, typed update, address all the points below using Roman numerals. Include:

- I. Group members, subject of workshop, and grade level of learning experience,
- II. Your answers to these three questions. (From the front side)
  - A. Why is this learning experience important (i.e. What's the point?)? [Make your explanation a paragraph in length.]
  - B. What will your classmates know or be able to do or demonstrate when you are done?
  - C. How will you know that (i.e. formal or informal assessment)?
- III. What is the purpose of the writing and how will you explain it to them so it has meaning to them?
- IV. What is your Essential Question?
- V. What book are you reading to establish the reading/writing connection?
- VI. Describe the think aloud/write aloud you will do.
- VII. A preliminary outline of what you will do for the 40-45 minutes with the estimated length of time for each segment,
- VIII. Your plan to complete the project on time,
- IX. One to three questions for me.

N.B. Whoever sends the update to me, cc (copy) it to your group members. I can then ?Reply All? and send the update with my comments back to each of you.

If you have your classmates work in groups, come up with a creative way of putting them into groups for your presentation. For example, one semester a group taped the roles for their classmates under the chairs in the classroom.

Point 1 on the rubric - Once you have completed your presentation, your classmates will fill out Appendix A. I feel students deserve a wider response than simply that of the teacher. The Appendix A sheets, signed by your classmates, will be given to the presenters so that they can see the narrative comments that accompany the ratings.

Point 2 on the rubric - You will score yourself and your partners with the Group Work Peer Assessment (Appendix B). These are due at the beginning of class on the day you present. You will receive Appendix B from your group mates.

Point 3 on the rubric - You will write a one full page, single-spaced reflection on your writing workshop and your participation in the preparation for the group project. In paragraph one, write what you learned about creating this writing workshop lesson. Connect your reflection to your clinical experiences and your hopes for your future classroom. In paragraph two, describe the learning you did by working in this group. What did you learn about yourself as it relates to group work? Be specific as you reference some of the points in Appendix B. In paragraph three, refer to Appendix A in Writing Essentials (p. A-2). Comment on one, two, or three of these statements that resonate with you. Explain why they have personal meaning to you. These papers are to be sent to me electronically the night before your presentation.

EDU 320/520 Writing Essentials  
Teaching and Learning Experience Rubric

Unacceptable

Acceptable

Proficient

Distinctive

1. Classmates? and Instructor?s evaluation  
(10)

Not to Acceptable level (0-7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

2. Partner(s) and self-evaluation (10)

Not to Acceptable level (0-7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

3. One page Reflection

(10)

Not to Acceptable level (0-7)

All the required elements

(8)

Written with clarity  
and specifics

(10)

Score \_\_\_\_\_ of 30

Deductions

- 3 late reflection (not in the night before the teaching you will do)
- 3 late Appendix Bs (not in prior to start of teaching)
- 2 late or no Appendix B self-evaluation (just did it for your group mates)
- 2 not 50 words of narrative/description in your Appendix Bs.

Appendix A

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Writing Workshop lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

WRITING WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Needs Improvement

Meets Expectations

Exceeds Expectations

Engaging ?hook? to open the lesson

Use reading book effectively

Think aloud/write aloud or shared writing demonstration

Used language that demonstrates respect, affirms, and encour- ages (p. 92 in WE)

Time to write and share for classmates

Equal Participation  
among group members

Quality  
of handout

Enthusiasm

Professionally dressed as if they were teachers

One or Two Strengths:

One Suggestion for Improvement:

Reviewer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

GROUP WORK PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Name of group member \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior

Not at all (2)

Seldom  
(4)

Sometimes  
(6)

Often  
(8)

Always  
(10)

\* Sought first to understand, then to be understood

\* Didn't sit back nor dominate the conversation

\* Proactively involved in the project

\* Sought to be democratic in decision-making

Spoke in a courteous manner

Brought positive energy to the process

Worked with others to answer questions/resolve problems in group



Was willing to take on responsibility for group tasks

Produced her/his fair share of the work required

Produced quality work

\* - from Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey

On the back of this paper, write at least fifty words of feedback for the two categories below. All fifty words could be in one category or the other. This paper is due at the start of the class period on the presentation day.

1. One or Two Strengths:
2. One Suggestion for Improvement

Your grade (1-10) for this group member \_\_\_\_\_