**Education, Culture and Employment
Northwest Territories
English Language Arts
10-3, 20-3 & 30-3**

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To the English Language Arts -3 Teacher

A key feature of the success of the -3 courses is to get students to take responsibility for their own learning. As Cris Tovani puts it in *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* "I don't know if teachers can work any harder than they're already working, so we've got to find ways to make students carry more of the thinking load in our classroom."(Tovani, 2004. p. 19). Although students in English 10-3, 20-3, and 30-3 may initially appear disengaged, the responsibility for learning is theirs as much as for any other student. In the English -3 courses, the teacher must emphasize strategies for learning rather than copious explanations. Students need to have opportunities to make choices and need to learn how to understand their own learning and set their own goals for improvement. The development of regular reflective practice is a significant factor in the success of students in these courses.

Talk must be stressed in this series of courses even though these students may be the very students who talk the least in other classes. All people need competencies in listening and speaking so that they can have a voice in the local and global community. To this end, students in -3 courses are invited to explore language use in their own community and in the electronic media. Emphasis in these courses is on oral and visual literacy, on reading skills developed through texts of the students' choosing, and on the transactional function of written texts. Upon completion of these courses, students should feel competent enough to use, manipulate, and reflect upon a range of oral, print, and media texts taken from workplace, community, and leisure contexts.

Literacy from leisure skills is important in these courses. In addition to ownership and the right to take control of one's learning, pleasure is a motivational feature of education for any student. When working with the -3 students (students who are often several grades below level, have sporadic attendance, with a long history of lack of success in school) the teacher must avoid the tendency that Randy Bomer describes in his book *Time for Meaning*:

For the kids who don't love school, we just make it more boring. In nonacademic classes, students do more seat work, worksheets, précis, more grammar and skills, and much, much less writing. The teachers express even less concern about pleasure in reading, relationship of literature to life, the development of one's own response, critical thinking, or respect for diverse opinions…Because there is no pressure to have everyone in nonacademic classes know the same things for college, we might expect to feel freer there to experiment and expand the definition of English class, but our need to feel like a dispenser of information seems to overwhelm that sense of freedom. (Bomer, 1995. p. 14)

This sequence of courses presents the opportunity to "expand the definition of English class". Adaptability and flexibility are the keys to working with the students profiled for these courses. Students will need to be taught through guided practice and modeling but they will also need opportunities to work in groups (or with partners) and to participate in meaningful class discussions. Teacher read alouds and think alouds are important, as is the scaffolding of learning experiences. Assessment needs to be continuous and ongoing so that students can see immediate results and can monitor their own improvement. Self-assessment and reflective practice need to be an essential part of assessment. All of the six language arts should be assessed in these courses, so that students can talk about and represent what they know instead of always writing what they know. Finally, in this sequence of courses there has to be less correlation between attendance and marks.

The -3 courses need to focus in what students CAN do to provide a focus on success and growth that will foster lifelong learning in addition to learning in other school subject areas. As Chisholm (2005, p. 84) observes, ". . . the dominant discourse . . .has been one of rights, development, social justice and nation-

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building. The curriculum can be seen as one of the pre-eminent vehicles of this discourse." The -3 sequence of courses is particularly designed to develop skills in students that will increase their ability to lead fulfilling lives in an increasingly challenging world. Communication literacy has changed, with greater emphasis placed on texts other than print, and a growing need for critical thinking skills.

Knowledge of learning processes has increased greatly in the past decade, resulting in changes in teaching practice. David Booth (2006) discusses the importance of reading to emotional well-being as well as economic productivity, with an overview of the many ways of learning to read with considerations of the impact of technology on the process. He further comments on the importance of critical reading skills over the accumulation of knowledge in today's world. This sequence of courses addresses the four basic literacy divisions that he describes: school literacy, life literacy, print literacy, and technological literacy.

Jorgenson (2006, para 2) asks, "Why is instructional change necessary in our schools? First, because in the past decade there has been an upwelling of developments featuring research-based, classroom-proven, "best practice" teaching strategies – accompanied by pioneering discoveries about learning and learners – which are simply too compelling to ignore." To support teachers in addressing the many challenges relating to both "what" and "how" to teach, a wide range of professional resources are recommended. These are intended to help teachers of these courses to explore instructional strategies. While some are specific to reading and writing skills, many address other transferable issues related to multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, formative and "backwards design" assessment and others.

These courses may also be considered "bridging" courses, one that provides students an opportunity to improve their confidence in basic literacy skills in preparation for the more literature-based -1 and -2 ELA courses. These courses provide opportunities for students to build their competence in the six language arts with a variety of text genres.

The recommended sequencing flow is represented below:
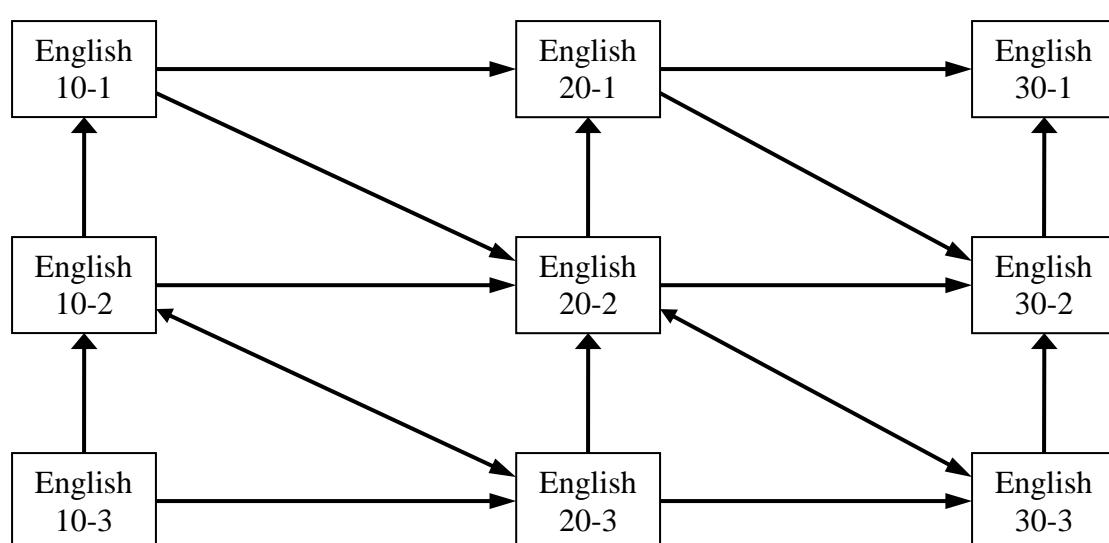
In transitioning from -3 to -2 courses, it is important to consider the increased literature focus of the latter course when choosing whether students should move to the course of the same grade level or

the previous level. Students who have been more frequent readers may have a stronger literature base and vocabulary than those who do not.

Overview

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes that comprise the English Language Arts -3 course sequence can be described as "the English you need" for personal satisfaction and to function in society and the workplace. Competency in the English Language Arts allows people to share in, to contribute, and to enjoy local, national, and global communities and cultures. Students will develop the knowledge of the language that has its audience and purpose in lived experience, the electronic media and the workplace. They will develop skills and strategies related to the ways that listeners, viewers and readers position

themselves and are positioned in relationships to texts. They will develop skills and strategies that enable them to create, enjoy, appreciate, evaluate, use, and critique the texts through which ideas and images are created. They will develop the attitudes and habits of mind that allow them to participate actively in leisure activities, the local community, and in the workplace. While some students may transition back into the ELA –2 stream, most of students in ELA -3 will progress at their grade level, acquire credit, and be able to finish their formal schooling with dignity.

Comparing English Programs

-1
Relationships between text genres
Response to literature
Abstract concepts
Literature focus
Mandated text genres
Diploma exam
5 General Outcomes
6 Language Arts
-3
Concrete focus
Portfolio evaluation
5 components
Local content
Technology as tools
Choice of text genres
Transactional Functional writing
Writing in context
Division of text genres
-2

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Rationale of English Language Arts –3

ELA 10-3, 20-3, and 30-3 courses were designed based on the data collected and interpreted in various NWT research documents including: Towards Excellence, Lessons for All, and NWT Students Support Needs Assessment. The student profile (Appendix 1) for the ELA –3 candidate is a result of the interpretation of the research and field experience provided by various education stakeholders across the NWT. The development o5 a distinctive sequence of ELA courses for the NWT student is based on the student profile and guided by our Beliefs About Educating Children and brain research principles.

One of the central goals of the English Language Arts –3 sequence of courses is to promote literacy by encouraging extensive reading, through a variety of texts, and reflective response to these texts in order to prepare an informed citizenry, so that their complex futures can be full of paths toward information, knowledge, and wisdom. Hence, the students of today need parents, teachers, librarians, and friends to promote and provide choices to extend and enrich their literacy options with different texts, along with time, places, and opportunities for adding new ones to their crowded lives. (Booth, 2006)

The ELA –3 sequence of courses emphasizes the functional or practical uses of language. It is the literacy of adult life and work: the literacy that establishes people's value in the workplace, showing what they know, what they can do, and how well they can work with others, many of whom are different from themselves. The courses are intended to help students:

- manage the vast array of information, in oral, print, electronic, and other media forms, with which they are presented daily;

- develop information, communication, and self directional skills in the context of practical and meaningful applications within the classroom;

- think critically and independently in order to function as responsible citizens within the home, the workplace, and in the local and global community;

- acquire transferable, practical employability skills;

- become metacognitive through reflection and feedback in order to gain greater control of their thinking and learning, and

- become lifelong learners.

Being a skillful communicator able to do more than read or respond to traditional texts enhances a student's personal, social, and civic life. Communicating today involves connecting both traditional and alternative texts, including digital, to navigate and negotiate today's world. A 21st Century learner must be able to understand how language works, how to find and question the cultural stories being shared, and how to act on his or her options. (Beers, et al., 2007) The challenge for teachers is to help students build a solid literacy foundation that promotes a positive disposition toward literacy and the ability to think.

A Note About Resources

This series of courses embraces a broadened definition of text to include oral, print, visual, and multimedia forms. Throughout these courses, students should study and create a variety of forms of texts.

Student Resources

Print texts have been the most common text form used in the past. As readers, students should be exposed to a variety of literary, informative, and persuasive texts as sources of both knowledge and enjoyment. As written text creators, students should write a variety of texts to make sense of and convey their ideas.

Oral texts include both casual and formal as well as immediate and distant contexts of storytelling, speeches, discussions and conversations. Students should practice creating and responding to a variety of oral texts to share information, build community, and develop a positive sense of self.

Visual texts also span a wide range of purposes, audiences, and contexts. They include pictures, collages, diagrams, tableaux, mime, and nonverbal communication.

Any text that combines two or more of the other types of texts is considered multimedia. Some examples are: demonstrations, oral presentations, videos, films, graphic novels, cartoon strips, plays, drum dancing, and Internet Web sites.

"Real world" texts are certainly a desirable alternative to anthologies and other artificially assembled materials to make the course as practical and real as possible for the students. A collection of brochures, posters, flyers, and magazines will be helpful.

A single anthology has been recommended for all three years of this course series. The anthology's role is to act as an anchor or centerpiece of the units, providing a familiar connection for both teachers and students. It is hoped that by encouraging use of a wide range of other texts, including periodicals, brochures, film, and Internet resources, that we will reflect the true nature of the real world in gathering information.

An effective classroom library needs to include the materials mentioned in the *first* paragraph as well as a wide selection of novels on a variety of topics at a wide range of reading levels.

Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit are two valuable resources available to help incorporate cultural knowledge into these courses. Locally developed resources may be available through regional Teaching and Learning Centers to determine what locally developed resources may be available. First Nations offices and regional councils may also have research based materials relating to oral history and land use. Another valuable source of information is the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center, which has an extensive collection of government documents, photographs, and personal documents. There may be similar local resource collections in some communities.

Organizations and individuals in the community may also contribute to valuable learning experiences. Career Development Centres have trained personality profile facilitators (e.g. True Colors, Personality Dimensions) and businesses and government departments may have employees with skills and knowledge to share in the classroom (e.g. business development plans, health care, self-advocacy). Accessing other resources enriches learning experiences and expands students' realization of where knowledge resides.

As technology has become an integral part of life in the 21st Century, the success of implementing these courses relies on regular and extensive access to computers, to digital information, and to the Internet. Technology has changed life in our northern communities, providing access to information, services, and goods that were not previously available on a daily basis. Both we and our students must be proficient at using this technology to be competitive in the employment market. Reliance on Internet sites for instructional materials does have some drawbacks as well as advantages.

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While providing current and up-to-date information, the reliability and durability of websites is a significant factor. Those associated with long term organizations or institutions, or have themselves been in existence for over 5 years are generally more stable. In addition, some sites also provide CD ROM copies of their lesson materials – a plus for classrooms without Internet access and to compensate for changes to the sites. Several others have included downloadable versions on their websites.

Effective sites are regularly updated; a positive feature as they incorporate new issues and concerns facing teachers and students. However, this may mean that some lesson materials are no longer available on-line, or have been changed to remain current. Where possible, an adapted version has been supplied that is classroom based using the previously available materials. It is important that the teacher always preview the sites mentioned in the lessons to ensure their continued existence and maintenance. This apparent potential frustration of changing resources can be a strength of these courses, allowing it to evolve with changing needs and conditions.

Computer access is essential not only for obtaining information, but for student to become proficient at using a variety of programs. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has identified computer use as one of the nine "Essential Skills", and it is included in nearly all of the occupation profiles. Additionally, in daily life, computer skills have become more essential as more activities are carried out via the Internet, including online banking and shopping, both of which make life in isolated communities easier.

Graphic novels are an emerging and growing form of text. These blend visual text with the printed word and provide valuable opportunities to discuss the power of representation in telling a story. These texts may be less overwhelming to the students in this sequence of courses, while providing opportunities to discuss literary and stylistic elements.

Teacher Resources

The resource list for this sequence of courses includes an extensive list of teacher professional readings, as it is the *approach* to these courses that adds to its distinctiveness from the -1 and -2 courses.

Applying the Fundamental Beliefs
About Teaching and Learning to English Language Arts -3

The fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning direct the instructional design for the ELA –3 student through some key practices. This methodology guides the reflective practitioner when planning for and assessing students in English Language Arts -3. These key practices are the correspondence between philosophy and practice. It is important to note that the practices listed below are appropriate, and even essential, to all English Language Arts courses, but are being highlighted in ELA –3 because of the specific student, and his / her needs, identified in the

Student Profile (Appendix 1). The highlighted practices include:

- Responding to individuals, curricular principles and outcomes, and creating, with student input, a relevant and appropriate program;

- Differentiating through content, processes, and products;

- Creating the opportunities for choice and interest;

- Encouraging risk taking to explore issues that matter to them;

- Motivating students through challenging authentic experiences that connect the curriculum (skills and strategies) to their lives;

- Engaging students in the construction of knowledge through respectful, purposeful tasks, through active learning;

- Exploring language use in both traditional and other media texts;

- Offering content grounded in the local community;

- Creating opportunities for students to build relationships that extend from the classroom into the broader community;

- Promoting talk by setting the conditions for positive peer interaction through small flexible groups and guided conversations;

- Empowering the students to ask questions, to explore their own convictions, and to assert themselves;

- Teaching students to become strategic readers and writers and gradually releasing responsibility to the students;

- Guiding metacognition through reflection and feedback that allows students to observe their thinking processes and set realistic goals for learning;

- Expecting student involvement in both informal and formal assessments and build a portfolio;

- Setting the conditions for students to articulate their knowledge and understanding; and

- Providing sustained time and meaningful opportunities for reading, writing, and talking about worthwhile texts and ideas.

*See **Principles of What Adolescents Deserve: Principles for Supporting Adolescents' Literacy Growth**, by Doug Fisher (Appendix 2)

WNCP Framework and English Language Arts –3

Five General Outcomes (GO) serve as the foundation for the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework and for the NWT English Language Arts Curriculum. General Outcomes (GO) are broad statements identifying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate with increasing competence and confidence from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The General Outcomes (GO) are interrelated and interdependent; each is to be achieved through a variety of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing experiences.

General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to access and explore prior knowledge and experiences of self and others**

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, and other media texts, through a process**

General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to plan and focus an inquiry or research and interpret and analyze information, through a process**

General Outcome 4: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to clarify and enhance oral, written, and visual forms of communication, through a process**

General Outcome 5: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to celebrate and build community within the home, school, workplace, and wider society**

*See **The ELA Curriculum As A Planning Tool** (page 22)

Organization of English Language Arts -3

There is a continuum of outcomes for the three grades of the ELA –3 courses. The ELA –3 sequence of courses is distinct from the ELA -1 and ELA -2 course sequences in its organization. The three ELA-3 courses are organized around five components at each level so that ELA 10-3, 20-3, and 30-3 could be taught in the same classroom if necessary; however, **this series of courses does not lend itself to being taught during the same time period as the ELA –1 and -2 courses**.

- Everyday Literacy
- Family Literacy
- Land as Text and Local Issues
- Media and Critical Literacy, and
- Workplace Literacy.

To reinforce the real-life nature of these courses, all six language arts are woven into each learning experience just as they are in everyday life.

Embedded in each of the five components are the most relevant of Human Resource Development Canada's (HRDC) National Occupation Classifications' (NOC) Essential Skills (Appendix 5). **It is critical that the Learning Outcomes be of primary importance and that they drive the teaching and learning**, rather than the Essential Skills as this sequence of courses does not have a workplace component. It is recommended that following explicit instruction, the practice of the skills and strategies be embedded in authentic speaking, reading, or writing for real purposes and audiences, as it is more effective than through isolated exercises, such as worksheets. Language acquisition and growth in meaningful authentic contexts is more effective than through the isolated study of Essential Skills related to specific work placements, but it is critical that the learning outcomes be of primary importance and drive the teaching and learning.

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English Language Arts –3 Components

Component 1: Everyday Literacy

Everyday literacy is the examination of environmental texts and written materials that primarily serve a function in non-school settings. These real life texts are not intentionally designed for classroom or instructional purposes nor are they in book format, yet they provide sources of reading. Real life texts tend to favour functional or informational text structures that better prepare students to work with non-fiction texts. The variety of functional texts include: environmental print (billboards, signs), texts for coping with time (TV guides, schedules), texts for coping with space (maps, catalogues), texts for coping with complexities (directions, manuals, menus, advertisements), and texts for building community (banners, cards, cards). Where these texts may appear to be simpler to read, the simplest of texts can be complicated, fully comprehending them and reading them critically is a higher level thinking skill.

Oracy is an important aspect of literacy in each component of these courses and the real world, but there is an opportunity in this component to place special emphasis on oral texts and the oral communication skills and strategies involved in daily routines. It is the use of oral language to receive, synthesize, and express thoughts, information, and ideas.

Through component one, students develop the skills to gain access to information, to ask questions, to interpret appropriate information, to assert themselves, and to evaluate and discriminate between sources. Of prime importance is emphasizing the transferability and practicality of these skills.

Component 2: Family literacy

Family Literacy is the study of children's literature, folk tales, young adult fiction, graphic novels, parenting resources, and other texts used in the home. It is through the reading and writing of simpler texts with dignity that students have the opportunity to expand their repertoire of strategies and skills in reading

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and writing. It is also an opportunity to learn about how young children learn to read and represent, or to learn how to read to children. In 2001, Wade-Wooley, Pantaleo, and Kirby conducted research into the effect of a family literacy program on the reading levels of the adults involved. They observed:

> Daily reading of the children's books allowed the adults crucial practice while exposing the children to valuable parent-child interaction and exposure to print. Parents were given practice with difficult words from classic children's books which have stood the test of time. This allowed them to read fluently with expression to engage the children in the story, illustrations, and sometimes print.

As many students have responsibilities for young children, their skill development will benefit the next generation.

Component 3: Land as Text and Local Issues

Land as Text and Local Issues offers an opportunity to strengthen the students' sense of personal, community, and cultural identity through traditions, local issues, history, or stories. Understanding issues of particular interest to their communities, and how these relate to the nation and world beyond encourages students to become active and contributing members of their communities. This component will look different in each classroom in order to reflect the culture, values, needs, and goals of each community. Relevant use of locally developed resources and individuals from the community are significant factors in the meaningful delivery of this component.

Chambers (1999) notes that Dene Elders recognized the need to make connections between local situations and the world students are a part of, not just geographically, but with consideration to the changing times. She explains, "to seek new interpretive tools for understanding what it means to be Canadian and what Canadians might become in the 21st century. In "Place-Based Education – Learning to Be Where We Are", Smith discusses the relationship between school and the real world, is most meaningful when studied initially from a perspective of local concerns and relating those understanding to larger issues in the global world.

This component offers the opportunity to transform learning from a process involving textbooks, lectures, and videos to one that empowers the students to ask questions, to explore their own convictions, and to assert themselves. Students become the creators of their own projects, choosing meaningful issues to focus on, and develop a plan for studying the issue, and creating a plan of action if one is needed and taking action. The role of the teacher is changed, from deliverer of curriculum to facilitator and advisor. The emphasis of such activities is less on content and more on skills, providing authentic opportunities for practice. Any required knowledge will have greater meaning as it is linked to the concerns and interests of the students.

Component 4: Media and Critical Literacy

Media Literacy is the study of electronic and multimedia text. These new literacies allow us to use the internet and other information and communication technology to identify important problems, locate information, analyze the usefulness of that information, synthesize information and solve problems, communicate the solution to others, and entertain ourselves. Because students are to operate in today's world, they need the skills, strategies, and dispositions to do so. Through the new literacies, students can be successful readers and writers (Leu, in Opitz et al., 2006).

Critical Literacy starts with the premise that in every use of language some context occurs that includes power relationships. Thus language is a form of politics. All texts (including popular culture, such as scripts for movies, television shows, advertisements, and electronic texts) are written for a purpose. The writer's purposes are seldom transparent, and so readers need to develop and exercise their critical faculties in order to filter what they understand and believe from texts. Students need the tools to unmask the true purposes of language in a particular context, so there is a shift from the traditional focus on grammatical corrections to the uses of language. The –3 students must develop skills beyond skimming

and scanning of text and adopt a more critical stance or risk being unknowingly tricked, persuaded, or biased (Coiro, in Opitz et al., 2006).

An element of critical literacy is critical thinking. It requires that authors state their claims clearly, and that they be supported with evidence - and also that those claims and their support be open to scrutiny and challenge from people who hold different views. Critical thinking is the careful study of arguments, the assessment of the supporting evidence and the logic with which the reasons are marshaled toward a conclusion. Critical thinking involves thinking through problematic situations to arrive at reasoned judgments.

In the Media and Critical Literacy component, the –3 ELA student has legitimate access to texts that are often perceived as something removed from the school reading materials with which these students have not had much success. The texts are seen as attractive and, if selected carefully, are at an appropriate level of difficulty. Through the endless number of topics available, struggling or striving readers are likely to be engaged and motivated to construct meaning through dialogue and reflection. The skills learned through this component are part of the transferable skills that students need in the workplace and as contributing members of our democratic society.

Component 5: Workplace Literacy

Workplace Literacy is the practice and improvement of communication skills through: the exploration of personal interests and aptitudes, the critical evaluation of careers and self, resume and job application writing, the development of interview skills, participation in group discussions, team work, presentation skills, conflict resolution and negotiation skills. Connections to career development outcomes could be appropriate in many activities of this component. In this context, "work" should not be thought of only as paid employments, but as volunteer activities and community participation as well.

Although this sequence of courses is not intended to be a job preparation program, it is important to note that schools and the workplace require similar skills from their clients. (Brown, 2006 and Millar and Morton, 2007, p. 171) Included throughout the ELA -3 courses are Human Resource Development Canada's (HRDC) National Occupation Classifications' (NOC) Essential Skills. These Essential Skills are considered to be transferable skills, skills that are not exclusive to one occupation, but are important to a number of occupations. Because there is no workplace requirement in this sequence of courses, the Essential Skills are a major focus of this component although they are also embedded in all relevant learning experiences within the other four components.

Scheduling recommendations

There are approximately 95 instructional days per semester, and approximately 5 days may be lost due to special events, therefore there are 18 weeks of class time. The following guidelines for time allocations are recommended:

# of weeks	Component
2	introduction/orientation/establish portfolios
3	component 1
3	component 2
3	component 3
3	component 4
3	component 5
1	creation and sharing of demonstration portfolio

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Suggested Activities and Projects

The activities and projects in these courses should be as practical and related to real world applications as possible. Students are more likely to be involved in their learning if they see it as something that could be applicable to their lives. Allowing for choice of topic as much as possible, is important, as students will be more engaged by content that is of interest to them For example, novel studies are not required, but may be done as an element of one of the components.. It is also hoped that the teacher allows for student input to or adaptation of the activity to make it more meaningful to the students. The role of the teacher has changed to that of facilitator and interpreter. As McCutcheon (1998, p. 195 & 198) describes, ". . . teachers' work involves transforming that which is intended into a set of activities in order to make intended skills and knowledge accessible to students. . . . Teachers are the filters through which the mandated curriculum passes. Their understanding of it, and their enthusiasm, or boredom, with various aspects of it, color its nature." The teachers' knowledge of their students is an important factor in the selection of personally and culturally relevant authentic activities.

Flexibility in the structure of projects is also important, to allow for both individual and group work experiences and to provide opportunities for student choice. Bigelow and Vokoun (2005) write, "Choice is at the root of student engagement, interest, and creation of the self as a viable member of society." (p. 2). They discuss a range of ways to incorporate choice in classrooms, from offering choice of topic on a writing assignment to involving students in year and unit planning, but also address the need for teacher guidance as students learn to make appropriate choices. In stating that "[P]art of the hidden curriculum in all classrooms is teaching students the skill of making good choices in the first place" they remind us of the need to model experimentation with texts to guide student learning. Students may benefit from being offered a limited selection of choices at first, and being able to draw on their own creativity as they gain confidence.

*See **and HRDC's Essential Skills** (Appendix 3)

The chart on the following page contains suggested activities for the five components

Suggested Activities by Level

Component	10	20	30
Everyday Literacy	Driver's test recipes, menus and groceries goals and decision-making buying and setting up electronics – computer, stereo, etc. handling a problem with a purchase	phone skills – oral presentation banking credit buying consumer privacy & identity theft planning a trip using and interpreting equipment manuals	budgeting and independent living on-line shopping & auctions investing and insurance Buying (and financing?) a car
Family Literacy	the importance of literacy - webquest reading a story book aloud – shared and guided reading reviewing children's books creating a family library	author/illustrator report activities to promote literacy companion activities for books novel study	novel study creating a children's text
Land as Text and Local Issues	Anthology of biographies of local elders or stories based on a local event (e.g. flood)	Local guide for tourists or new residents Writing or editing relevant Wikipedia articles	Examination and action plan for a local issue
Media and Critical Literacy	Internet terms and use media and internet awareness evaluating web sites (& reality TV shows) spyware on-line safety	advertising techniques - stereotypes in media designing a magazine phishing cyber scams and spam scams	film study – TV show categories – reality, entertainment news creating a documentary peer to peer file sharing
Workplace Literacy	Personal interest inventories career investigations career bio Guiding Circles	resumes and cover letters interviews personal and career portfolios	on-the job forms and business writing costs vs. benefits of education post-secondary applications

Essential Skills (HRDC)

Activities and projects should also recognize and **support** as much as possible the nine Essential Skills as defined by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. *These Essential Skills are considered to be transferable skills, skills that are not exclusive to one occupation, but are important to a number of occupations.* Language acquisition and growth in meaningful, authentic contexts is more effective than through the isolated study of the Essential Skills related to specific work placements, but it is critical that the Learning Outcomes be of primary importance and drive the teaching and learning. A secondary benefit of the effective teaching of reading and writing strategies, critical thinking, and the encouragement of creativity is that the Essential Skills will be developed. To assist in this, the most relevant Essential Skills have been noted for each of the learning outcomes, **but it is vital that they are embedded in the learning activities and are not taught in isolation.**

These nine Essential Skills are:

Reading Text
- **-** refers to reading material that is in the form of sentences or paragraphs.
- generally involves reading notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports or journals.

Document Use
- refers to tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics (e.g., line, colour, shape) are given meaning by their spatial arrangement. For example, graphs, lists, tables, blueprints, schematics, drawings, signs and labels are documents used in the world of work.

  If a document includes a paragraph of text such as on a label or a completed form, it is also included in *A. Reading Text*. Documents requiring the entry of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs are also included in *C. Writing*.

Writing
- **-** includes:

  - · writing texts and writing in documents (for example, filling in forms)
  - · non-paper-based writing (for example, typing on a computer)

Numeracy
- **-** refers to the workers' use of numbers and their being required to think in quantitative terms.

Oral Communications
- pertains primarily to the use of speech to give and exchange thoughts and information by workers in an occupational group.

Thinking Skills
- differentiates between six different types of cognitive functions - these functions are interconnected
  - Problem Solving
  - Decision Making
  - Critical Thinking
  - Job Task Planning and Organizing
  - Significant Use of Memory
  - Finding Information

Working with Others
- examines the extent to which employees work with others to carry out their tasks. *Do they have to work co-operatively with others? Do they have to have the self-discipline to meet work targets while working alone?*

Computer Use
- indicates the variety and complexity of computer use within the occupational group

Continuous Learning
- examines the requirement for workers in an occupational group to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge.
- tests the hypothesis that more and more jobs require continuous upgrading, and that all workers must continue learning in order to keep or to grow with their jobs. If this is true, then the following will become essential skills:
  - · knowing how to learn;
  - · understanding one's own learning style; and
  - · knowing how to gain access to a variety of materials, resources and learning opportunities.

More details can be found in appendix 3 and at the HRDC website at http://srv600.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/esrp/english/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml

Principles of Learning

Literacy Today

Within the last two decades, English language arts educators have expanded the understanding of English language arts instruction. At all grades, the focus is on acquiring language and literacy skills through listening, speaking, viewing, and representing, as well as reading and writing. "Visual culture and the proliferation of multi-media texts have changed literacy practices both inside and outside the classroom. . . . reading and writing are also being transformed textually, relationally, spatially, and temporally." (NCTE, 2008, 17). In keeping with the literacy demands placed on them, students need to learn to read and produce a wide range of texts, including media, functional, and literary texts.

David Booth in his book reminds us, "What constitutes literacy has changed throughout history. It has only recently become expected and desirable to be fully literate in every format and genre. A literate culture will be determined not only by its literature - fiction or non-fiction - but also by newspapers, magazines, television, computers, networks, films, CD-ROMs, hypertext, emails, and other forms yet to be created." (Booth, 2006) Allington reminds us that we are moving into an area he calls "thoughtful literacy" where reading goes beyond decoding or 'reading', remembering, and reciting on demand to demonstrating thinking and understanding. "Thoughtful literacy is the reason for reading." (Allington, 2006) "Once we understand that reading is meaning making, not message receiving, we can begin to align our teaching with the cognitive realities. We can act on three key insights about the reading process: reading is interactive, constructive, and strategic." (Daniels & Bizar, 2005) That interaction among the reader, the text, and the context is a complex, recursive thinking process. (Tovani, 2000). It is about being literate in the broadest sense - being able to make sense of and respond to both visual and written symbols. Likewise, it is about seeing the possibility of connecting visual texts and written texts to enhance the meaning of both. (Opitz and Ford, 2006).

Jim Burke (2007) discusses the effect of technology on literacy, learning, and workplace skills. He cites Tom Friedman's concept of a "flat" world in which increased access to advanced technology provides greater opportunities for participation and competition in today's global society. Being literate requires more than the skills of reading and writing; it requires the skills for working with others in the modern world. He cites eight roles that "students need to be great: collaborators, leveragers, adapters, green people, personalizers, and localizers" (p. 152). It is essential for students to identify their strengths in these areas to best contribute to the team.

Beliefs about Educating Children

Education in the Northwest Territories fosters practices based on some fundamental beliefs about children and learning. It is our belief that practices that recognize and value diversity are beneficial to all children. We believe:

- All children are unique.
- All children can learn and experience success.
- Children come to school with a vast potential for learning.
- Children bring life experiences and knowledge with them.
- Children have common needs; they also have many differences.
- All children have the right to quality learning opportunities that are challenging and suited to their individual strengths, needs, and learning styles.
- Education must be relevant and meaningful for each individual.
- Learning is a life long process that occurs in the classroom, in the home, and in the community.
- Educating our children is a shared responsibility.

(Adapted from Educating All Our Children, Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling, 1996, 4-5)

Brain Research

Brain research has cast a new light upon the learning process, which impacts curriculum design, teacher preparation, and classroom practices. The synthesized research has identified the "principles of learning" sometimes referred to as brain/mind learning principles". These include:

- The brain is a social brain.

- Learning is developmental.

- Learning is an active and purposeful process of constructing meaning. Active processing includes critical thinking, reflection, and metacognition.

- The search for meaning or understanding occurs through patterning. Every brain is organized uniquely.

- Emotions are critical to patterning and complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.

- People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates.

- Learning is both an individual and a group process.

(Adapted from Caine and Caine, Education of the Edge of Possibility, 1997, pp. 104-108)

Research continues to expand our knowledge about how we learn and how our brains process information and experiences.

Culture Based Education

The teaching of these courses needs to be culturally responsive. This needs to be a consideration not only in the Land as Text and Local Issues component, but embedded throughout all components. Documents such as Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit can provide a foundation for what is important to study, enrich, enhance, and preserve, but local Elders and community members are also valuable resources.

Differentiation

Differentiated instruction is responsive instruction: a teacher's reaction to a learner's needs. In responding to a wide diversity of learners, it is guided by general principles of differentiation, such as respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and ongoing assessment and adjustment. Teachers can differentiate content, process, or product, according to student's readiness, interests, and learning profile, through a range of instructional and management strategies. (Tomlinson, 2000)

Millar and Morton (2007, p. 170) describe a process of differentiation as one with " . . . principles of inclusion within a flexible framework." This view redefines the teacher's role on the classroom from curriculum deliverer to learning facilitator. Rather, the teacher's major task is to create the conditions that enable students to work in ways that nurture their unique abilities. That implies that a teacher is "not only a knowledgeable instructor but also one capable of responding to students as individuals with unique gifts and experiences who can and do make significant contributions, for better or for worse, to the learning environments of which they are a part." Crawford, 2001, p. 65)

Differentiation is the recognition of and commitment to plan for student differences. The goals of a differentiated classroom are to maximize student growth and to promote individual student success. (National Research Center on the Gifted & Talented)

Metacognition

Metacognition is being conscious of one's thinking, learning, and problem solving processes. It includes: planning a course of action before beginning a task, monitoring ourselves during the execution of a plan, backing up or adjusting a plan consciously, and evaluating ourselves upon completion of a task. Metacognition instruction would include learning how to learn; how to study; and how to use strategies of question asking before, during and after reading. It also involves: helping students become acquainted with their own and other's learning styles; the intelligences in which they excel; their own learning preferences; and strategies that can help them in situations that do not match their best learning modalities. Metacognition is thinking about our thinking (Costa, 2001).

Metacognition is the cornerstone of an effective portfolio. Students must be encouraged to regularly examine and reflect on their strengths, challenges, performance, and products. Portfolios are not a project to be completed at the end of the course, they are a developing documentation of student learning and growth throughout the entire course.

Technology

Information technology is an essential part of any English Language Arts course. It is a powerful tool for gathering, manipulating, organizing, and communicating information. In order to explore the uses of information technology in language, students need opportunities to learn how to use technology for research, writing, communicating, information management, and presentation.

We are all aware of how extensively technology has changed the way we communicate, not only in the ways that we create text, but in the texts that we have access to. As Will Richardson (2008) points out, "today, anyone with an internet connection can now publish without any prior review. Although this is good in terms of creating a wider body of knowledge to draw from, it obviously requires that we teach our students to become more active consumers of that information instead of just passively accepting it as legitimate." (p. 126). This makes teaching critical thinking skills to our students even more important. Richardson also discusses technology's role in the collaborative nature of the creation of content. It is essential that we provide opportunities for students to work together, using technology whenever possible.

See excerpt from Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms (Appendix 7)

Project Based Learning

Whittle, Morgan, and Maltby (2000) align project-based learning with constructivist principles. Their approach highlights "A problem-based instructional design [that] supports the integration of multimedia design theory and its practice" (Constructivist Pedagogy). Brown (2008) relates a model presented by conductor and teacher Patricia

O'Toole used by the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP). This model has five points that may equally effectively guide planning for projects in these courses:

· Selection of appropriate activities to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students,

· Analysis initiated by the teacher to reach an understanding of the learning and performance requirements of the activities,

· Outcomes of the projects and activities are determined by the goals set by the teacher,

· Learning strategies are selected to enable students to reach the outcomes and goals, and

· Assessment is planned for before, during, and after activities to assess student's existing knowledge and needs, provide guidance during learning activities, and to evaluate final performance

This process is consistent with the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol's (WNCP) recommendation to begin planning with the assessment by identifying the goals and outcomes that we hope to guide students to achieving. "Backward mapping requires us not only to think about the curricular goals we want students to meet, but also to deconstruct the complex learning processes involved to identify the stages of learning" (p. 15). By selecting an engaging project in consultation with students, we can then 'work backwards' as we identify the scaffolding activities required to provide them with the skills needed to complete the project.

In a study of projects in Davidson County (North Carolina) School District, McGrath and Sands (2004) acknowledge teachers' concerns that this approach will be time consuming, noting that teachers actually observed that students became so engaged with their learning that it "actually frees the teacher to work individually with students" (p. 52). While it may require more front-loading by the teacher, implementation of project-based learning lightens the classroom management load, as engaged students require less monitoring. Students presented with well organized and relevant projects defined by clear criteria are also better able to monitor their own progress

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towards the end result. An essential first step for teachers is to "develop the essential question that would provide an overarching theme for the study" (p. 55). They further note that the ownership that students took in their learning was a major contribution to their successful completion of both their projects and the courses. Once again, this is an important feature for our students, who have often felt powerless in classrooms throughout their educational experience.

Regina Public Schools and Saskatchewan Learning (2003) identify the following benefits of Project Based Learning:

∗ For teaching and learning
- accommodates different approaches to learning
- makes content more meaningful
- develops higher-order cognitive skills, life skills, technological skills and self-management skills

∗ For students
- are excited, engaged, enthusiastic and empowered about their learning
- dig more deeply into a topic and expand their interests
- retain what they learn
- make connections between different subject areas and other aspects of their life
- gain confidence and improve social and collaborative skills

∗ For older students...
- take initiative
- assume responsibility for their own learning
- make decisions and choices about their learning

http://www.centralischool.ca/~bestpractice/project/benefit.html

These are admirable goals for all students, but they are even more important for the students of these courses, who have rarely experienced such an educational environment and has most often demonstrated the opposite of these behaviours.

Developing Critical Awareness and Critical Thinking Skills

With the increased emphasis on skills over content in most new curricula, an awareness of the need for critical thinking skills has grown. As previously discussed, the increased access to a wide range of sources and information provided by the Internet has especially increased the need for critical awareness and thinking. Eisner (1990, p. 69) describes the effect of such activities on student self-sufficiency, "Creative curriculum development provides activities that challenge, that require higher order thinking, and that diminish students' dependency on the teacher in knowing when they succeed." Well designed activities that challenge students to use these dimensions can also be more engaging for students and more rewarding for teachers to design.

In designing critical thinking activities, a central challenge could be the cornerstone of each component/theme, with scaffolding activities designed to supply the intellectual tools needed for thinking critically. These intellectual tools are:

Background knowledge – the information about the topic required for thoughtful reflection

Criteria for judgment – the considerations or grounds for deciding which of the alternatives is the most sensible or appropriate

Critical thinking vocabulary – the range of concepts and distinctions that are helpful when thinking critically

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Thinking strategies – the repertoire of heuristics, organizing devices, models and algorithms that may be useful when thinking through a critical thinking problem

Habits of mind – the values and attitudes of a careful and conscientious thinker

(The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2005)

After selecting the central challenge, teachers can determine which intellectual tools are required and plan scaffolding activities to teach the tools.

Habits of Mind

1. persisting
2. managing impulsivity
3. listening with understanding and empathy
4. thinking flexibly
5. thinking about thinking
6. striving for accuracy
7. questioning and posing questions
8. applying past knowledge to new situations
9. thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
10. gathering data through all the senses
11. creating, imagining, innovating
12. responding with wonderment and awe
13. taking responsible risks
14. finding humour
15. thinking independently
16. remaining open to continuous learning

(Costa and Kallick, Habits of Mind)

English Language Arts

Background

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education detailed The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12, (hereafter called the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework.) In the spring of 2002, the collaborative team including: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory adapted their title to: The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, (hereafter referred to as the WNCP).

The intent of the WNCP was to provide a scaffolding of General and Specific Outcomes (GO and SO). Each jurisdiction would then develop the descriptive Learning Outcomes (LO) with which the classroom teacher, students, and parents could measure student success. This enabled the learning communities of each jurisdiction to have a stronger voice to acknowledge their unique characteristics and cultural diversity. As a result of this process, the Learning Outcomes (LO) developed, by each jurisdiction, would maintain the integrity of the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework while highlighting their contexts.

The Nature of Language

Language is the basis of all communication and the primary instrument of thought. Composed of interrelated and rule-governed symbol systems, language is a social and uniquely human way of exploring and communicating meaning. As well as being a defining feature of culture, language is an unmistakable mark of personal identity, and is essential for forming interpersonal relationships, extending experience, reflecting on thought and action, and contributing to a democratic society.

Language Acquisition and Development

Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Children learn language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, establish relationships with family members and friends, and strive to make sense and order of their world. They may come to school speaking one or more language or learn another language in school. It is important to respect and build upon a child's first language. Experience in one language will benefit the learning of other languages.

In their early years, children develop language informally. Long before they understand explicit rules and conventions, children reproduce the language they hear, and use language to construct and to convey new meaning in unique ways. Later language learning occurs in specific contexts for specific purposes such as learning about a specific subject, participating in the community, and pursuing work and leisure activities.

Language development is continuous and recursive throughout students' lives. Students enhance their language abilities by using what they know in new and more complex contexts and with increasing sophistication. They reflect on and use prior knowledge to extend and enhance their language and understanding. By learning and incorporating new language structures into their repertoire and using them in a variety of contexts, students develop language fluency and proficiency. Positive learning experiences in language-rich environments enable students to leave school with a desire to continue to extend their knowledge, skills and interests.

Language Learning: A Shared Responsibility

Students, parents, teachers, and the community share the responsibility for language learning. Students require ongoing opportunities to use language in its many forms. Opportunities to learn language occur first at home and are extended as children move into larger community. Schools provide environments where students continue to develop language knowledge, skills, and strategies to achieve personal, social, and academic goals.

Language development is the responsibility of all teachers. For example, subject area teachers teach the specialized vocabulary and language structures of each subject. English language arts teachers, however, have a special role because of their focus on language, its forms, and functions. They help students develop and apply strategies for comprehending, composing, and responding in a variety of situations.

The Importance of Language

All children come to school with rich experiences and language. Language learning is an active process. Valuing the use of both the heritage and second languages is essential for strengthening personal identities and enhancing interpersonal relationships. The cultural diversity of our Territories offers the school system a wealth of starting points for classroom activities and language emanating from authentic experiences: our children are richer for the multiple languages of our Territories. The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories recognizes: Chipewyan, Cree, Tłįcho, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (including Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuqtun), and Slavey (including North Slavey and South Slavey) in addition to English and French. Other rich cultures enhance our Territories with their languages and traditions too. The key to the celebration of each individual is to begin from his or her experience base and build a learning community together.

Just as children come to school with language, they also come as members of multiple learning communities, including the family and the extended community. The school system is another learning community that welcomes our children with their rich backgrounds. The relationship between home and school is a reciprocal one. In building a school community, the learning environment naturally extends beyond the physical walls of any school reaching out into various communities. The dialogue between the communities shapes the learning environment. Creating the learning environment is a shared responsibility.

Actively involved learners are responsible for their growth. Purposeful, meaningful involvement ensures opportunities to relate to authentic situations that create a challenging and motivating learning environment. Comfortable students become risk takers and active, responsible learners. Positive learning experiences encourage lifelong learning. The foundation for lifelong learning is the culture and language that each individual brings to any learning situation.

Thinking and Learning Through Language

Thinking, learning, and language are interrelated. From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students use language to make sense of and bring order to their world. They use language to examine new experiences and knowledge in relation to their prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs. They make connections, anticipate possibilities, reflect upon ideas, and determine courses of action.

Language enables students to play an active role in various communities of learners within and beyond the classroom. As students, speak, write, and represent, they also listen to, read, and view the ideas and experiences of others. Critical and creative thinking and learning through language occur when students reflect, speculate, create, analyze, and synthesize.

In addition, language facilitates students' development of metacognitive awareness; that is, it enables them to reflect on and control their own thinking and learning process. Language helps students develop an awareness of the skills and strategies they need to complete learning tasks successfully and to communicate about themselves as learners.

The study of English language arts enables each student to understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction, and learning. Students become confident and competent users of all six language arts through may opportunities to listen and speak, read and write, and view and represent in a variety of combinations and relevant contexts. All the language arts are interrelated and interdependent; facility in one strengthens and

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supports the others. In the outcomes of this WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework, the six language arts are integrated.

The ELA Curriculum As A Planning Tool

The NWT ELA Curriculum serves as a planning tool. From the Learning Outcomes (LO), both teachers and students can build language rich experiences to explore the knowledge, skills, and strategies expected of students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Through on-going dialogue and on-going assessment, planning is a shared responsibility. The information garnered is used to create balanced instructional experiences and helps to define areas where teaching, practice, or maintenance are the main emphases. That becomes the foundation that builds competence and confidence within the integrated six language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. Planning together and integrating the language arts validates students' strengths, challenges, and interests.

Students and teachers set goals and make plans to support student achievement. Their plans reflect the learning outcomes of many curricula. Through a variety of instructional approaches, the Learning Outcomes (LO) are not kept separate and distinct; rather, many are integrated into all learning experiences, reaching beyond the language curriculum. A careful analysis of the learning experience determines the appropriate combination of Learning Outcomes and the series of instructional steps, which lead to proficiency and the achievement of the standards for each individual. Opportunities to revisit and practice, through a variety of authentic experiences, are necessary to maintain and refine previously learned knowledge, skills, and strategies as well as to consolidate new learnings. Planning for a balanced language experience is a shared responsibility: all students, all teachers, parents, and the community.

The standards (Learning Outcomes) for each grade are organized along a Continuum.

Rather than being a "Scope and Sequence" checklist, a Continuum of learning shows the sophistication of knowledge, skills, and strategies acquired over time. When planning, the consideration of the students' varied learning experiences, their strengths, and their challenges helps to determine where each individual is along a Continuum. The structure of a Continuum acknowledges that individual learners have different beginning and end points: for instance, a student placed in a grade eleven classroom may be working on a combination of Learning Outcomes (LO) from grades ten, eleven, and twelve. Learners can attain competencies at any time and continue to grow along a learning Continuum. Therefore, each learning context is unique and shapes the progression through the Learning Outcomes at a different pace and in varying sequences. When a Learning Outcome is attained, a learner progresses to its related Learning Outcome in the following grade; the progression is horizontal and more sophisticated across a Continuum. It is important to note that learners who are not yet proficient with specific skills need to continue with scaffolded instruction at their individual levels. It is that information that leads to informed instruction, either for the individual or for larger groups. It is necessary to consider the details of the Learning Outcomes of a grade as well as each individual's progression along the Continuum. Both assessment and evaluation inform instruction.

As a planning tool the NWT ELA Curriculum welcomes the involvement of multiple partners, on multiple levels, in the development of the learning process. The process depends heavily on student involvement through planning and self-assessment. By understanding their strengths, challenges, learning styles, and interests, students play an active role in structuring learning experiences that best meet their ever-changing needs. The recursive nature of learning requires on-going assessment, by both student and teacher, to adjust the learning experiences accordingly along the Continuum.

Assessment

This sequence of courses has been developed in response to student needs. It is distinct from the ELA -1 and -2 sequence of courses most notably in its approach to evaluation. The philosophies of *student-involved* assessment, *assessment FOR learning*, and *assessment AS learning* are essential to the success of these courses. Thoughtful assessment recognizes the individual differences of the students and can lead to more effective instruction. "Assessment practices lead to differentiated learning when teachers use them to gather evidence to support every student's learning, every day, every class (Earl and Katz, 2005). Assessment does not need to be formal and teacher-driven, such as testing, but should include student reflections on their successful mastery of outcomes.

In keeping with the philosophy of providing real-life and meaningful activities, and to develop life-long learning practices, there is no final exam. In its place, **the development of a portfolio of work by each student is mandated.** Throughout the course students will be creating a *working* portfolio that will help shape their final *demonstration* portfolio. (For explanations of the different portfolios, see Assessment Section.) Their growth will be evident through both types of portfolios. The final *demonstration* portfolios, presented at the end of each course, will be weighted accordingly:

· **In 10-3 and 20-3 the value may range from 20% to 30%**

· **In 30-3 the value will be 40%.**

To ensure the maintenance of high standards, specific expectations and requirements of the portfolio are identified in see Assessment Section. Teachers will need to adapt these to their particular students and situation. Crawford (2001, p. 63) cautions, "When methods of instruction and assessment focus primarily on prescriptive procedures and techniques, access to diversity is restricted or even blocked altogether." The challenge lies in finding the balance between remaining true to the intent of the curriculum while adapting to the needs and interests of the students.

*   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *

Assessment Of, For, As

Assessment through a portfolio does not mean that traditional "testing" will be abandoned, but rather that the focus is "Assessment **FOR** Learning", monitoring which concepts and/or skills have been mastered, and which may require additional practice or exposure. The Alberta Assessment Consortium (AAC) defines assessment **for** learning as "assessment experiences that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes." (AAC, 2005) It may also be called diagnostic or formative assessment. In contrast, the AAC considers assessment **OF** learning as "assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about student performance at the end of a period of instruction to be shared with those outside classrooms" (AAC, 2005). It is also known as summative. It is important to remember that in this -3 sequence of ELA courses, the assessment should include student reflection and goal setting as it directs classroom instruction.

Assessment **AS** learning is another significant focus of these courses. The *Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education* defines assessment **AS** learning as involving students in metacognition. (Earl and Katz, 2005) Students themselves are the connection between assessment and learning. They need to process new information, make connections with prior knowledge, assess their competence and confidence with it, and reflect on their performance in order to set the next steps in their learning. This requires that the student be aware of and familiar with Curricular expectations and

content. The portfolio is a tool that encourages regular reflection.

Learner Centred Philosophy of Assessment

A portfolio is mandated as the final product in these –3 courses where students show the evidence of their growth and learning, since there is no final exam for these courses. This portfolio is not to be a teacher collected record of student achievement, but is to be a student created and reflective collection of evidence. This corresponds with The NWT Adult Basic Education English Curriculum's learner centred philosophy of assessment. It lists the characteristics of learner centred assessment as:

- **Assessment is participatory and reflective** – Instructors and learners discuss how they learn, what they want to learn, successes and difficulties, how well they have met their goals.

- **Assessment is done throughout instruction and looks at learning over time** – When learners keep writing folders, portfolios and journals they are collecting assessment information that will show the process of their learning over time.

- **Assessment is an integrated part of teaching/learning, not a separate activity** – Daily activities such as journal writing, keeping reading lists, comparing a new piece of writing to an earlier one, adding new work to a portfolio or checking in on a goal are all assessment activities.

- **Assessment reflects the complexity of learning** – Assesses the interconnected skills required for meaningful reading and writing: discrete skills (punctuation, spelling, grammar): higher level skills (ability to make meaning from text) and functional skills (writing a letter, reading for information).

- **Assessment guides instructors in daily lesson planning**- Ongoing assessment helps identify learners' successes and challenges in turn, assists in planning daily and long term lessons

- **Assessment involves real, purposeful activities** – Learners are evaluated through the kinds of tasks and processes similar to those used in daily lives. Learners self-evaluate by reflecting and writing in journals: they track their progress by recording what they've written or read and then analyze the information (how much; what types; is it clear): they observe their behaviours while working in groups and determine which skills/abilities they are using and which they are not.

- **Assessment uses a variety of methods of knowing and communicating** – Draws on a variety of styles to communicate what is learned using methods that are familiar to their cultures and experiences.

- **Assessment supports critical thinking and lifelong learning** – Helping learners' to practice self-evaluation fosters critical thinking and includes learning about progress, about the process of learning and about strategies that facilitate effective learning.

(p. 10)

The ELA Curriculum as an Assessment and Evaluation Tool

Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting, 2001, defines assessment and evaluation.

· "Assessment is a systematic process of gathering and interpreting information about what a student knows, is able to do, and is learning to do." (Glossary)

· "Authentic assessment provides students with descriptions of expected performance levels and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Students are then requested to perform, produce, or otherwise demonstrate skills that represent their learning in real life settings in and out of the classroom. Learning is exhibited over time to show evidence of progress, achievement, and application of learning." (Glossary)

· "Evaluation is the process of making judgments and decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through assessment." (p. 2)

Assessment and evaluation have different purposes; both are essential to inform instruction. Assessment refers to gathering and interpreting information for the purpose of informing teaching and to help students learn more. Assessment is the descriptive feedback used to interpret the learning. Assessment is authentic when it combines evidence of progress, achievement, and the application of learning. By seeing strengths, understanding challenges, and setting goals, learning is enhanced. Evaluation stems from assessment. Evaluation implies bringing meaning to that information through a complete examination of **all** of the assessment information. That analysis and reflection leads to informed instructional decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through multiple assessments. Evaluation includes the collection of information, its interpretation, and informed decision-making. Through observation and interpretation of processes and products in meaningful contexts, test scores and grades have the potential to shape the plans for a balanced learning experience; separately, test scores and grades are just information. Both assessment and evaluation inform instruction through the assessment of learning, for learning, and as learning.

The NWT ELA Curriculum acknowledges the importance of assessment and evaluation. Opportunities for both are reflected throughout the Curriculum's Continuum and in the Assessment sections, All language assessments in this document begin from the measurable Learning Outcomes detailed in the Continuum. The Learning Outcomes (LO) provide the scaffolding for frequent self-, peer, parental, and teacher assessment. Planning for instruction is integral to balanced learning experiences and planning for assessment is integral to learning.

Student involvement is the key to empowerment and the establishment of self-reflection processes applicable to all learning situations within and beyond the traditional educational setting. Developing the Metacognitive strategies and skills to

understand, analyze, and reflect on one's growth over time, builds capacity within each individual.

The ultimate goal of evaluation is to develop empowered learners who assess their growth. Through authentic experiences, meaningful, classroom-based assessment provides frequent opportunities for feedback that allows teachers and students a framework for reflection and adjustment. The resulting dialogue enhances, empowers, and celebrates learning. Informed learners take ownership: they develop self-assessment strategies and skills, as they understand the assessment criteria and procedures. Empowered learners celebrate their identity: they build on the diverse knowledge, skills, and strategies valued in their cultural backgrounds. As learners become self-directed, their processing strategies and the quality of their product are enhanced.

English Language Arts **must** be viewed as assessing literacy through the six language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. To guide educators, the English Language Arts Curriculum contains a variety of on-going assessment opportunities. The suggestions provided below are but a few ways in which to collect data about both the processes and the products of a student's learning experiences:

- Rubrics for each of the six language arts
- Observations and anecdotal records
- Running records
- Student work samples
- Performance assessments
- Learning logs and response logs
- Self-assessments and reflections
- Parent assessments
- Peer assessments
- Questionnaires
- Miscue analyses
- Conferences and interviews
- Portfolios
- Inventories and surveys, and
- Individual Education Plans and Modified Education Plans

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Portfolios in the English Language Arts -3 Courses

Portfolio Requirements

In English **10-3** and English **20-3**, the weighting of the portfolio **may range** from **20%** to **30%** of the final course mark.

In English **30-3**, the weighting of the portfolio **will be 40%** of the final course mark.

Portfolios for 10-3, 20-3, and 30-3 *must* include:
- √ A cover
- √ An introduction – about the student and the portfolio process
- √ A resume
- √ A cover letter for the resume
- √ A table of contents
- √ A baseline profile and reflection
- √ A record of reading progress/reading done during the course (e.g., reading log)
- √ A goal setting evaluation/reflection
- √ A closing reflection

In addition to these requirements the portfolio must include:

in **10-3** – a SMART* goal for the following year

in **20-3** – a SMART* goal for the following year applying learning from this course to other courses

in **30-3** – a SMART* goal applying learning from this course to out-of-school experience, such as post-secondary education or workplace

* Smart goals are described as:
  S = specific
  M = measurable
  A = achievable
  R = realistic
  T = time sensitive

Although the same elements are required at all grade levels, there are *different expectations of work at the different course levels*. For example, the reflection expected of a

30-3 student should make stronger connections between their work, their goals, and the curriculum (see evaluation rubrics).

Students will also require varying levels of guidance and support at the different grade levels. The expectations have been designed to enable a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student over the three years of these courses. Outcomes and expectations at the three grade levels are often defined similarly, with the following qualifiers:

10-3 – "with guidance" – instructional assistance from the teacher

20-3 – "with support" – use of teacher-provided supports and tools

30-3 – "independently" – students select and implement supports and tools on their own

See Release of responsibility chart (Regie Routman's Optimal Learning Model –appendix 4*)*

As evidence is collected, progress in all six language arts and five general outcomes need to be represented by the portfolio contents. With this in mind, not all work should be in print form. Following are some examples of how these may be documented:

Language Arts Learning

- To demonstrate **reading** you may include a reading log, book review, or reflection on reading growth.
- To demonstrate **writing** you may include any of the written assignments such as a letter, brochure, essay, or story.
- To demonstrate **viewing** you may include a response to or analysis of a poster, or a review of a movie, TV show, or music video.
- To demonstrate **representing** you may include a poster to increase awareness of a cause or an event, or a visual used to accompany a story, article, or report.
- To demonstrate **listening** you may include notes made on a presentation by a guest

speaker or a music review, or materials used for studying, a project, or research.

· To demonstrate **speaking** you may include an audio or video recording of a presentation, or where such recording is not possible, a printed copy of the script, accompanied by peer or teacher comments or evaluation.

General Outcomes

· To demonstrate **accessing and exploring** prior knowledge and experiences you may include a graphic organizer such as a KWL sheet used to identify pre-knowledge.

· To demonstrate **comprehending and responding** to texts you may include a review of a TV show, song, video, or movie, or a collage to represent a character in a story.

· To demonstrate **managing** ideas and information you may include a graphic organizer used for planning a piece of writing, a database of research information, or a brochure that uses headings.

· To demonstrate **clarifying and enhancing** communication you may include drafts of a work that indicate revisions done or a critique of a peer's work.

· To demonstrate **celebrating and building community** you may include reflection on completed work, a journal entry reflecting on a group project, a picture of the group working together with a representation of their final product.

These content pieces will also represent learning about:

Key Skills to demonstrate

Research
Expository writing
Persuasive writing
Compare/contrast
Presentation
Letter writing
Organization
Summarize
Resume

Tools to demonstrate use of

PowerPoint

Word processing
Spreadsheet
Database
Templates
Video
Graphic organizers
Visuals
Webpage creation
Collaborative wikis

Specific assignments have not been identified at different levels to allow for individual choice by students in recognition of varied learning styles and multiple intelligences. In addition, it may accommodate the cycle of activities required by multi-level classes.

Some additional considerations when planning portfolios with your students:

➢ A reflection is required for each item included in the portfolio (a possible template is provided in Word so that you may modify it as necessary)

➢ Not all items need to be generated within these courses; some may be drawn from other courses in recognition of cross-curricular connections.

➢ The use of technology and computer skills should be reflected in the presentation of work as much as possible.

➢ Be sure that students are demonstrating their process through draft stages, and not just including final results.

➢ One portfolio entry may satisfy several skill and tool requirements.

➢ Work from a previous year may be refined and included in the current portfolio.

➢ Persuasive writing may be a part of reflection.

➢ The portfolio cover may be considered a visual element.

10-3 Rubric

Process X 2

	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited
Reflection	• Identifies and demonstrates characteristics of successful learners • Independently identifies strengths and challenges • Intuitively aligns self-assessment with standards and articulate criteria to others	• Identifies what it is to be a successful learner • Identifies own strengths and challenges with supports • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria	• Inconsistently identifies what it is to be a successful learner – may require support • Identifies strengths and challenges with guidance • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria with support	• Requires support to identify what it is to be a successful learner • No evidence of self-reflection • Bases self-assessment on personal opinion
Progress and Growth	• Includes more than one draft in addition to final copy for some assignments • Identifies and explains areas of revision • Makes connections between progress and goals with guidance • Advocates for self by communicating needs related to learning preferences	• Includes one draft stage of each final copy • Identifies areas of revision and attempts to explain them • Tracks progress and sees some connection with goals • Recognizes and describes personal learning preferences	• Includes one draft of most final copies • Identifies areas revised • Tracks progress with guidance • Recognizes existence of different learning preferences	• Includes a single uncompleted draft with no final copy of some work • Little or superficial revision • Little attention to progress and growth • Unaware of different learning preferences
Goals	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal for the following year independently • Prepares a plan to achieve goals independently	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal for the following year with guidance • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with supports	• Develops a general goal for the following year • Prepares and follows a plan to achieve goals with guidance	• Develops no goal for the following year, even with guidance • Does not prepare a plan for the following year, even with guidance
Sharing	• Explains details of learning represented with some connections to examples in portfolio • Prepares for presentation through rehearsal (without audience) • Invites questions from the audience	• Gives overview of learning represented connecting specific skills to examples in portfolio with guidance • Prepares independently with prompts • Responds to questions from audience	• Lists learning represented with limited evidence • Preparation is done with guidance from teacher • Introduce self and thank audience: reads from a prepared script	• Does not identify specific learning or skills represented • Unprepared • Does not acknowledge audience

Product X 1 - *Guidance may be an integral part of students' meeting these standards*

	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited
Organization	• Follows a consistent pattern (e.g. drafts, final, reflection) with guidance • Uses text features to guide the reader – e.g. page numbers, headings, subtitles, index tabs . . .	• Follows a consistent pattern – e.g. drafts, final, reflection – with guidance	• Inconsistent pattern of entries, even with guidance	• No sense of organization
Content	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice • Integrates materials from other classes	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections are incomplete • Inconsistent voice *even with guidance*	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections are missing or incomplete • No discernible sense of voice *even with guidance*
Physical Presentation	• Reflects creator of the portfolio • Demonstrates unique and creative application of elements of design such as colour and arrangement of images	• Reflects creator of the portfolio • Displays deliberate use of elements of design	• Identifies creator of portfolio • Few elements of design displayed *even with guidance*	• Appears anonymous • No elements of design displayed *even with guidance*

20-3 Rubric

Process X 2

	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited
Reflection	• Describes and demonstrates characteristics of a successful learner • Explains strengths and challenges with guidance or support • Intuitively aligns self-assessment with standards and articulate criteria to others	• Identifies and demonstrates characteristics of successful learners • Independently identifies strengths and challenges • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria with support	• Identifies what it is to be a successful learner • Identifies strengths and challenges with supports • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria with guidance	• Inconsistently identifies what it is to be a successful learner • Self-reflection is inappropriate and/or relies on external sources • Bases self-assessment on personal opinion
Progress and Growth	• Includes multiple drafts demonstrating growth of skills and strategies for all assignments • Explains revision process • Makes connections between progress and goals • Advocates for self by requesting adaptation of activities to suit personal learning preferences	• Includes more than one draft of some final copies • Identifies revisions and explains reasoning • Makes connections between progress and goals with guidance • Communicates needs related to learning preferences to others	• Includes one draft stage of each final copy • Identifies areas of revision and attempts to explain reasoning • Tracks progress • Recognizes and describes [personal learning preferences	• Includes one draft of some final copies • Identifies areas revised • Identifies some progress with guidance • Recognizes existence of different learning preferences
Goals	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal for the following year applying learning from this course to other courses independently • Prepares a plan to achieve goals independently • Follows plan from previous year independently	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal for the following year applying learning from this course to other courses with support • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with support • Follows plan from previous year with support	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal for the following year applying learning from this course to other courses with guidance • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with guidance • Follows plan from previous year with guidance	• Develops a general goal for the following year even with guidance • Prepares a vague plan to achieve goals even with guidance

Process Rubric – cont.

Sharing	• Gives detailed description of learning represented, supported by specific examples • Prepares for presentation and rehearses in front of an audience • Asks for and responds to questions and feedback from audience throughout presentation	• Gives detailed description of learning represented and connects examples from portfolio to specific skills: may need support • Initiates rehearsal and prepares using prompts (e.g. sentence starters) • Asks for and responds to questions and feedback from audience at end of presentation: develops rapport	• Gives general description of learning represented with limited evidence • Preparation and rehearsal is minimal and requires guidance • Acknowledges audience through presentation (e.g. eye contact, body language)	• Lists learning represented • Examples are not connected to learning • Unprepared • Introduce self and thank audience: reads from a prepared script

Product X 1 - *Support may be an integral part of students' meeting these standards*

	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited
Organization	• Follows a consistent pattern (e.g. drafts, final, reflection) with guidance • Uses text features to guide the reader (e.g. page numbers, headings, subtitles, index tabs . . .)	• Follows a consistent pattern (e.g. drafts, final, reflection) with supports	• Inconsistent pattern of entries, even with supports	• No sense of organization *even with supports*
Content	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice • Integrates materials from other classes	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections incomplete • Inconsistent voice *even with supports*	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections are missing or incomplete • No discernible sense of voice *even with supports*
Physical Presentation	• Layout features convey sense of personal identity • Demonstrates unique and creative application of elements of design	• Reflects creator of the portfolio • Displays deliberate use of elements of design	• Identifies creator of portfolio • Few elements of design displayed *even with support*	• Appears anonymous • No elements of design displayed *even with support*

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30-3 Rubric

Process X 2

	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited
Reflection	• Describes and applies characteristics of a successful learner, differentiated according to specific situations • Identifies strategies to address challenges • Intuitively aligns self-assessment with standards and articulate criteria to others	• Describes and applies characteristics of a successful learner • Explains own strengths and challenges • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria	• Describes and demonstrates some characteristics of a successful learner • Identifies own strengths and challenges • Aligns self-assessment with standards/criteria with support	• Requires support to demonstrate some characteristics of a successful learner • Identifies strengths and challenges with supports • Bases self-assessment on personal opinion
Progress and Growth	• Includes multiple draft stages that show clear evidence of changes and thinking in creation of next stage • Explains revision process in relation to the overall effect • Connects goals with the process of lifelong learning • Develops strategies to address learning style challenges and/or less preferred styles	• Includes multiple draft stages of final copy • Explains revision process and overall effect on product with support (e.g. checklist) • Makes connections between progress and goals • Advocates for self by requesting adaptation of activities to suit learning preferences	• Includes one draft for each and multiple drafts for some final copies • Explains revision process • Makes some connection between progress and goals • Communicates needs related to learning preferences to others	• Includes one draft for each final copy • Attempts to explain revision process • Requires support to make connection between progress and goals • Recognizes and describes personal learning preferences
Goals	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal applying learning from this course to out-of-school experience, such as post-secondary education or workplace with support • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with support • Follows and adapts plan from previous year independently • Assesses progress towards plan independently	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal applying learning from this course to out-of-school experience, such as post-secondary education or workplace with support • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with support • Follows and adapts plan from previous year and assesses progress with support • Assesses progress towards plan with support	• Develops a SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime sensitive) goal applying learning from this course to out-of-school experience, such as post-secondary education or workplace with guidance • Prepares a plan to achieve goals with guidance • Follows plan from previous year and assess progress with guidance • Assesses progress towards plan with guidance	• Develops a general goal for the following year even with guidance • Prepares a vague plan to achieve goals even with guidance • Does not follow plan from previous year, even with guidance • Does not assess progress towards plan, even with guidance

Process Rubric – cont.

Sharing	• Explains and supports discussion of learning with specific and multiple examples • Prepares comprehensively in front of an audience questions, practices) • Actively engages the audience: responds to feedback and requests for clarification	• Explains details of specific learning represented with specific examples from portfolio • Student is competently prepared • Requests specific feedback from audience (e.g. refers to particular examples) • Develops rapport	• Gives description of learning with general examples • Limited evidence of preparation • Invites questions and comments from audience at end	• Lists learning represented with no examples to support discussion • Unprepared • Acknowledges audience (e.g. introductions, eye contact, thanks)

Product X 1

	Excellent	**Proficient**	**Adequate**	**Limited**
Organization	• Follows a consistent pattern (e.g. drafts, final, reflection) with guidance • Uses text features to guide the reader (e.g. page numbers, headings, subtitles, index tabs . . .)	• Follows a consistent pattern (e.g. drafts, final, reflection) with supports	• Inconsistent pattern of entries, even with supports	• No sense of organization
Content	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice • Integrates materials from other classes • Includes a variety of text genres	• Represents all five General outcomes • Represents all six language arts • Represents learning of all tools • Represents learning of all skills • Includes a reflection on each entry • Has a consistent voice	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections incomplete • Inconsistent voice	• Representation of language arts, general outcomes, strategies, and tools are incomplete • Reflections are missing or incomplete • No discernible sense of voice
Physical Presentation	• Layout features convey sense of personal identity • Demonstrates unique and creative application of elements of design • Professional quality presentation	• Reflects creator of the portfolio • Displays deliberate use of elements of design	• Identifies creator of portfolio • Few elements of design displayed *even with guidance*	• Appears anonymous • No elements of design displayed *even with guidance*

Examples of Tools and Skills Connections

Following are some examples of activities and projects that could demonstrate connections between skills and tools.

	PowerPoint	Templates	Word Processing	Spreadsheets/ Databases	Visual	Presentations
Persuasive Writing	Pro and con charts Photos showing contrasts	Brochure about an organization	Discuss an issue	Record survey results	Anti-smoking poster	Letter to the editor Candidacy speech Application for funding
Research	Presentation on a person or issue	Brochure about Internet safety	Trip planning Restaurant menu Biography	Services available in multiple locations	Use of graphs, maps, and charts to present information	Oral report of findings to class Visual demonstration Panel discussion
Summary	Report	Newsletter or flyer		Features of different accommodations available when planning a trip	Storyboard Graphic organizers	Sharing main points of an article during a cooperative learning activity
Critique		certificates	Response to text Use of font to emphasis opinion or feelings		t-chart drama/role play	Music, book, or video review Panel discussion
Compare/ Contrast	Critique of 2 videos/songs/etc.	Advertising – strengths and weaknesses	Critique of 2 videos/songs etc. Compare a song recording with a video version	Hockey stats Winter vs. summer sports	Venn diagram/t-chart Poster	Critique of 2 videos/songs/etc. Book talks
Organize	Report Proposal	Resume Business card Menu	Response to text Proposal	Recipe file sorted food category/key ingredients	Graphic organizer Photo essay	Drafts, editing and final stages of work
Plan	Time line for event planning – e.g. feast, wedding . . . Proposal	Greeting card		Budget Car or student loan payment schedule	Timeline Graphic organizers	Practice of representation Networking

Portfolios

Introduction

Many tools are available to assist in the establishment of the portfolio, in print, on the internet, and in workshop form. Teachers are encouraged to draw on the resources of Career Development Centres whose career counselors are trained in a variety of workshops, most commonly True Colors, Career Dimensions, and Guiding Circles. This time is engaged in getting to know the curriculum, completing personal inventories, baseline reflection and baseline assignments, and establishing reflective practice that will be a cornerstone of the student generated portfolio that forms an essential part of assessment in this sequence of courses. Teachers can model reflective practice by asking for student feedback and demonstrating how their comments shape future activities. Although discussing teacher practice, Jorgenson (2006, para 23) makes us aware of a potential roadblock to reflective practice when he states "In many ways, it is demanding and time-consuming to engage in self-evaluation, to make time to meet and compare notes with colleagues, to try new approaches and continually work to refine and improve them." However, the value of reflection in refining practice and improving skills is incalculable and worthy of the time invested.

It is recommended that the final week of the program be used for student reflection on the entire program and their selection of significant work that best demonstrates their learning over the entire course. This process should culminate in some form of sharing festival or celebration which may or may not involve others from outside the class, such as significant people in the students' lives or other school or education council personnel.

What is a Portfolio?

There are many variations of a definition of portfolios. To illustrate, four typical definitions follow.

Porter & Cleland (1995) developed their definition of portfolios most clearly after having experienced the process with their

Reading/Writing Lab students, most of whom attributed their reading and writing challenges to their own lack of effort.

> We decided that a portfolio is comprised of a collection of artifacts accompanied by a reflective narrative that not only helps the learner to understand and extend learning, but invites the reader of the portfolio to gain insights about the learning and the learner. (p. 23)

Cook-Benjamin (2001) has synthesized the thoughts of Arter & Spandel (1992) in their definition of a portfolio as "a purposeful collection of a student's work that tells a story of the student's efforts, progress, or achievement." (p. 11)

Schipper & Rossi (1997), introduce a thorough discussion of the most significant aspects of a portfolio with their adaptation of Arter & Spandel (1992): "A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits processes, strategies, progress, achievement, and effort over time. Each entry in the portfolio includes a student self-assessment reflection that is based on specific criteria." (p. 4)

In considering the findings of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991), Shackelford (1996) defined a student portfolio as *"a purposeful collection of materials capable of communicating student interests, abilities, progress, and accomplishments in a given area."* (p.31)

Some common elements emerge from these and other definitions, which can be summarized by some significant words: purposeful, communicate, and learning. Effective portfolios are far more than mere *collections* of work. In her discussion of the use of electronic portfolios, Gibbs (2004) notes that "portfolios are not meant to include everything a student produces. . . . Students are expected to "collect, select, and reflect" (p. 27). As Shackelford (1996) notes, "The true power of a student portfolio lies in the "process" of its development. [It is the] production, selection, and reflection that encourages students to take responsibility for

and evaluate their own work (Five, 1993)." (p. 32).

With this element of student ownership included, portfolios begin to take many forms, as each student chooses to include very different representations of their learning journey. For some, the challenge lies in what to include in their portfolios. Hebert (1998) relates advice that was given by her colleagues Pearl Paulson and Leon Paulson: "Portfolios tell a story . . . Put in anything that helps to tell the story" (Classroom Practice section, para. 4).

For many others, the difficulty arises not from what to put *in* their portfolios, but what to *exclude*, resulting in great variations not only of content and form, but also in the size of the finished product.

The use of two types of portfolios is recommended:

1 Working portfolios which include baseline data assembled at the beginning of the course and work collected throughout the semester which is accompanied by self and peer reflection and evaluation criteria where applicable.

2 Demonstration portfolios which are created at the end of the course to display selected learning by the student through organization of selected baseline information and work samples collected during the course. These are to be shared during a "celebration of learning" event.

A significant feature to remember about portfolios is that their form and content may vary greatly - between classes, within a class, and over the years (Cook-Benjamin, 2001; Hebert, 2001). By ensuring that the element of individuality is encouraged, the portfolios created demonstrate great creativity. The process of creating the portfolios can be extremely empowering and revealing to students, as Cook-Benjamin (2001) observes

The final realization pertains to the effect that portfolio assessment has on students. . . . I have found that they have a real sense of accomplishment in the completeness of the portfolio. They see the growth they have achieved and the areas in which they still need to improve. (p. 13)

The depth of the learning they prompt more than compensates for the time devoted to them.

Why use Portfolios: A Powerful Instructional and Assessment Tool

Portfolios provide valuable experiences for both teachers and students. Arter et al. (1995) identify two basic purposes of implementing portfolios – assessment and instruction. Shackelford (1996) provides a concise look at both aspects.

As instructional strategies, they promote the application of knowledge, self-assessment, and the development of individual talents, skills, and values. As assessment tools, portfolios are an integral element of "authentic" and "performance" assessment systems for enhancing and evaluating hard to measure skills. (p. 31)

As an instructional strategy, portfolios can provide information to the teacher that may not be readily available through more "traditional" methods. Teachers receive insight about classroom activities from the point of view of the learner (Porter & Cleland, 1995), facilitating individualization of programs and activities more readily, a significant need for the students likely to enroll in our program.

Students are also enlightened through the steps in the creation of portfolios. The reflective process and self-assessment provide teachers with an excellent opportunity to teach students about assessment, both the vocabulary and the application of standards (LaBoskey, 2000). This understanding very clearly enhances student learning, as stated by Schipper & Rossi (1997), "Talking about self-assessment nails down learning in a way other methods don't" (p. 63). Throughout the stages of portfolio creation, students apply and extend their learning and self-awareness as they select which work to include, reflect on their performance and products, and identify the growth in their learning (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). They identify five key changes that result from the development of portfolios:

The process of portfolio development has a tremendous impact on student behavior. Students begin to

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· Take more responsibility for their learning
· Actively engage in the learning process
· Develop and express a new self-awareness and think about their own thinking
· Grow in confidence and self-esteem
· Set goals for future learning (p.2)

The level of student responsibility for and ownership of their behavior and learning as students feel empowered through their involvement in decision making (Lustig, 1996; White, 2004). The importance of student participation is explained by Porter & Cleland (1995)

During the reflective process, the responsibility for learning shifts from teacher to student. Learning becomes a personal responsibility because self-evaluation determines the instructional decisions made for future learning experiences. This is not something that we, as teachers, can do for or to our students. It is the learner's responsibility to sort through and examine the artifacts of their learning, then try to make their own sense out of it. (p.37)

Students take responsibility by being given the opportunity to have and to practice it, and this responsibility further translates into increased engagement in learning activities As Gibbs (2004) observes,

Students develop a better understanding of the criteria used in the grading process by having a visual reference such as the portfolio. Motivation to meet the criteria increases, and the results are a better understanding of the process and materials. . . . Students become active learners when they assume ownership of their learning" (p. 27).

Students have to *do* portfolios, not simply *have* a portfolio. Students become self-reliant as they realize that their portfolio will not be generated by the teacher (Wright, Knight, & Pomerleau, 1999). Students quickly realize that the portfolio is a reflection of them, both their personality and their learning, and are motivated to make the best and truest representation of both. As Mahoney (2002) observes,

I remembered how in previous years, I would be disappointed by some students' results on the final exam because they had failed to put in the necessary few hours needed to study. With the portfolios, students spent huge

amounts of time completing their project/final exam and never complained; some actually found it fun. (p. 157)

The use of portfolios is a highly effective way to teach students about assessment, particularly "assessment of one's own work" (LaBoskey, 2000, p 591). Metacognitive growth results from the student's participation in creating and reflecting on the portfolio contents (Hebert, 1998). Porter & Cleland (1995) share a quote from a student that clearly conveys the power of such participation.

"I like to do portfolios because in most classes the teachers say, "You're making a lot of progress." but you never see the progress yourself. I think the portfolio is more for your benefit because you can see for yourself growth and change as you become a better reader and writer, and when I see the change myself it is much more rewarding than when a teacher tells me I am changing." (p. 50)

The positive focus that portfolios place on learning is a significant contributor to personal growth, particularly increased confidence and self-esteem. Portfolios show what a child **can** do, whereas other reporting often focuses on what the child **can't** do (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). The diversity of the completed portfolios promotes tolerance for learning differences by providing for and encouraging uniqueness (Hebert, 2001). Describing their achievements to another is an essential part of the student's personal growth, and so an ". . . opportunity to interact about the content and meaning of those portfolios with people who matter . . ." (LaBoskey, 2000, p. 594) must be provided. Through this sharing of the portfolio and celebration of their learning students can recognize their own accomplishments and internalize a new sense of self-worth. It is an immensely positive experience for the students, providing affirmation of their value. Mahoney (2002) describes his portfolio sharing results:

On the day that other students were taking the English final exam, my eighth-grade class met and, for an hour and a half, students read each others' portfolios, gave short talks on their covers and themes, and read samples of the work in their collections. For that ninety-minute period, students listened, applauded,

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laughed, cried, and recognized each other as authors. (p. 157)

As students realize past successes, they can see a purpose in planning for the future. Portfolios are the ultimate preparation for life skills required beyond school. As Sunstein & Lovell (2000) relate,

The larger world our students enter after they finish their schooling will be one in which it is extremely likely that they will be "taking stock," continuously, changing jobs from five to seven times in the course of their careers. In such a complex climate, it's critical to develop a capacity for ongoing self-reflection and self-assessment. (p. 235)

A final thought relates to two current trends in student assessment – student-involvement and authenticity. I have discussed the methods and benefits of student involvement extensively. Glazer (1994) described the authentic nature of portfolios very concisely when she says, "**How do we make portfolios authentic?** We don't have to make them authentic. They **are** authentic." (p. 152).

Types of Portfolios

Charlotte Danielson and Leslye Abrutyn provide a brief but thorough look at portfolios in An Introduction to Using Portfolios in the Classroom.

In their discussion of the benefits of portfolios, they state

It should be noted that the benefits of portfolios result principally from the process of building and using them. While the portfolios themselves have value, particularly in the area of assessment (permitting the evaluation of a wider range of outcomes and documenting growth over time), it is the process of creation that offers great power to educators. Students become highly engaged in their own learning through the steps of selection and reflection, assume considerable responsibility for that learning, and enter into a different relationship with their teachers, one characterized as more collegial than hierarchical. (p. 19)

They also comment on the change in student involvement as a result of the development of portfolios.

Traditionally, classroom-based assessment had been an activity **done to** students, with teachers revising the tests, administering them, and evaluating student work. The students themselves assume a passive role in the process. Indeed, saying 'I got a B' conveys the notion that a grade is **given** by the teacher and **received** by the student. Portfolios, on the other hand, alter that culture. By engaging in a portfolio process, students participate actively in assessing their own work and monitoring their progress toward instructional goals. (p. 23)

Portfolios can also positively impact the teachers' instructional practice.

As teachers assist students in selecting items for a portfolio, they find they must be increasingly clear about their own standards for quality work. . . . Most teachers find that the process of explaining their expectations for student work engages them in important professional reflection, either alone or with colleagues. . . . They may discover, however, that they have never communicated these standards explicitly to students. (p. 35)

The types of assignments may also be influenced by the use of portfolios.

When some teachers embark on a portfolio project, they discover that much of the work their students are doing is not suitable for inclusion in a portfolio." Much of the currency of traditional classrooms – worksheets, word searches, questions at the end of a chapter, problem sets – would not make a positive contribution to a student's portfolio. (p. 36)

Their discussion of the application of portfolios for special needs students may also address the concerns of our multi-leveled classrooms within these courses.

Indeed, one could argue that portfolios are of the greatest value to special education students. Assignments may be adjusted so that they are accessible . . . Since portfolios are beneficial for documenting growth over time, special education students will have an

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opportunity to see their progress clearly. (p. 32)

An effective portfolio is more than a collection of exemplary work, as a portfolio shows growth and learning through a mixture of works in progress, finished work samples, and student reflections. The practice of reflection and refinement is essential to encouraging life-long learning. Additionally, this process can help our students to acknowledge and appreciate their strengths and accomplishments, rather than focusing on what was missed or what is yet to be learned or covered.

Danielson and Abrutyn identify three types of portfolios:

Working portfolios
· containing works in progress as well as finished work samples
· may serve a holding tank for more permanent assessment
· primary audience is student and teacher

Display, Showcase, or Best Works Portfolios
· promote pride and a sense of accomplishment
· audience beyond the classroom – parents, siblings, prospective employers
· parents, siblings, prospective employers

Assessment Portfolios
· to document the learning the student has achieved
· content of curriculum determines selection of items
· reflective comments by students describe learning linked to curriculum

Over the duration of these courses, the portfolio will evolve from a working portfolio to guide further learning, to an assessment portfolio to demonstrate the learning achieved in the course.

As the assessment portfolio is intended to demonstrate growth as well as mastery, it is important to establish the starting point, which may be done through completion of a *baseline profile*. At least, similar assignments should be retained throughout the course to enable students to compare their work at different times to observe the resulting changes. These

assignments may be a final work in themselves, or may be a step towards the completion of a major project. Items placed in the working portfolio should be dated and accompanied by a reflective comment from the student.

Teachers may choose to evaluate some of these activities, either on their own or towards completion of the major project, but may wish to record others as simply as completed. A guiding principle could be the relationship of these activities to the outcomes. For example, if an outcome is being reinforced or practiced for an additional time, successful completion of the step may be all that is needed. If an outcome is being approached for the first time, a more qualitative judgment of performance/completion may be appropriate to determine future instruction.

Students should be aware of the nature of the assessment of any assignment or project at the outset. At times a prepared criteria may be presented to the student, and at others, the criteria may be developed with input from the students**.** In addition, students need to be made aware of the process and intent of the portfolios at the beginning of the course, and of the role the portfolio will play in the assessment of their success in the course. Danielson and Abrutyn offer suggestions for the assessment of the portfolios which may be valuable to discuss and refine at the beginning of the course.

Evaluation Concerns

As our strand of courses intends to use a portfolio to demonstrate student accomplishments and growth instead of participating in a final exam, we need to develop sound practices for the evaluation of how effectively the portfolio demonstrates student achievement. This becomes a challenge in light of the recognition of the individuality of portfolios and the significance of maintaining the element of student choice.

There are sources that caution against grading the portfolios on the basis of quality, an opinion expressed by both teacher and students who use portfolios, and at different educational levels, from primary to post-secondary (Cook-Benjamin, 2001). The helpfulness and creativity

expressed by portfolios is attributed to the lack of assessment pressure (LaBoskey, 2000). Hebert (1998) considers the student-centered nature of portfolios, and believes that grading could reduce the sense of ownership children feel.

However, as portfolios are viewed as a significant part of school and classroom practice, and can be seen as requiring substantial amounts of time, there may be a perception that they *should* be included in the grading plan in some way. Strickland & Strickland (1998) recognize this fact when they say,

> Most teachers who have worked with student-owned portfolios would rather not grade them, but the reality of it is, grades are so much of the secondary school culture that they are here to stay. If portfolios are to find a place in our classrooms, teachers must find ways to grade them and to report to parents, without turning these portfolios into competitive products or teacher-pleasing assignments.

There are options that have been explored, and those that have not appeared to negatively impact the success of portfolios follow sound general assessment principles of student-involvement in creating the criteria, of ensuring that students understand the language and expectations, and of making sure that students are aware of the criteria in advance (Stiggins, 2005).

Characteristics of portfolio practices are embedded in many curricula, the most obvious of which are reflection, critical thinking, and collaboration (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). Therefore, portfolios can be considered to not only enhance student learning, but to be an element of it. As the portfolio reflects the student's learning, it is vital that the students create it. Porter & Cleland (1995) relate an analogy of a photo album, asking if someone else could accurately create a photo album of a holiday or event for someone else if you were not involved. Similarly, can we, as teachers, prepare a portfolio for a student that accurately shows their learning, particularly the learning that they most value?

With this realization, we must give students choice as to what to include in their portfolios.

However, this does not mean that teachers have no input into the composition of the portfolio, and will need to give guidance, particularly to beginning portfolio creators in the development and reflection to be included (Jones, 2001; Lustig, 1996). Strickland & Strickland (1998) comment that, "There is a fine line between control and support; between choice and lack of guidance." (p. 100). Activities and projects completed throughout the course need to be thoughtfully planned with consideration to their contribution to the portfolio. Johnson & Rose (1997) examine student involvement in portfolio creation.

The suggestions listed below can provide your teachers with a starting point for beginning to involve students in grading:

- Encourage students to participate in self-evaluations.

- Allow students to choose assignments to be graded along with or in place of those the teacher selects.

- Allow students to assist in deciding which elements of a subject or project should be graded.

- Give grades on the basis of criteria that the students and teacher have developed together.

- Encourage students to give themselves a grade and to provide a rationale for that grade, and then negotiate the final grade with teacher input.

- Have students participate in peer evaluations.

- Grade a minimal amount of work that is important for students to be learning. In other words, don't put a grade on everything and find a way to grade what's important.

- Set external criteria, such as how many pieces to be graded during a marking period, and have students select the pieces. (p.210)

While there will be variations in what student choose to include (Mahoney, 2002), the focus must be that collectively the choices demonstrate the meaning of the portfolio to the student (LaBoskey, 2000) and include justification of and reflection on the contents

(LaBoskey, 2000). Lustig (1995) reminds us that, "The works and samples that are kept in the portfolios need to be relevant to what the learners have been doing and how they have been growing." (p. 24).

Just as an exam must be grounded in the learning outcomes, so must a portfolio adequately represent the curricular goals, and any criteria established regarding the content must refer back to the curriculum (Schipper & Rossi, 1997).

This adds to the validity of including the portfolio for grading purposes as "The portfolio means of assessment builds on rather than dismisses the daily assignments . . ." (Hessler & Kuntz, 1992, p. 31). To support this, teachers must ensure that activities and projects align with the curriculum and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their competence (Jones, 2001). For students to make appropriate selections, they need to be aware of the expectations of the curriculum and the portfolio and be able to relate them. Wright, Knight, & Pomerleau (1999) express this clearly when they say, " . . . it is important that portfolios clearly relate to the purposes and pedagogies of a course or program: students need to know the "rules of the game" and to see that learning portfolios are integral to their undergraduate experience" (p. 100).

As a part of this, students need to develop an assessment vocabulary, which can be encouraged by the teacher's consistent use of applicable terms in the class. As students become comfortable with the terms and their meanings, they will also begin to value the processes that they represent (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). Familiarity with assessment terminology and methods will also enable students to participate meaningfully in evaluating the portfolio.

Although there are many possible approaches to evaluating portfolios, it is essential that students are aware of the criteria and standards in advance (Lustig, 1996; Schipper & Rossi, 1997). This could be done through either rubrics or checklists, and both may be appropriate to different aspects of the portfolio; some aspects, such as representing each learning outcome, may be best suited to

checklist use, while others, such as the depth of reflection, may be better evaluated through development and use of a rubric. Strickland & Strickland, 1998 suggest using a "collaboratively constructed grading scale – try it out on sample papers and then revise it through discussion and experimentation (p. 113). Such practice could accomplish two purposes: ensure that students have input into the criteria, and that they have a clear understanding of the performance criteria that will be applied.

A greater challenge facing the committee may lie in balancing the important factor of individual choice in the portfolio contents and format with our need to establish sufficiently standardized requirements for evaluation to ensure its acceptance as a replacement for a final exam, particularly at the grade twelve level, as well as making it a useful tool for students beyond their graduation (Wright, Knight, & Pomerleau, 1999). Hebert (1998) warns us not to be too prescriptive of the content, remembering that one of the strengths of a portfolio is that it provides opportunity for differentiation and that the choices made by the students reflect something about them as individuals (LaBoskey, 2000). Their choices may be different than ours, but if we have effectively taught the purpose of portfolios, to represent the learning designated by the curriculum, we can guide them about what to include without diminishing their ownership of their portfolio (Strickland & Strickland, 1998; Lustig, 1996; Hebert, 1998). Just as activities and projects will vary from year to year, so will the contents of the portfolios. As Hebert (1998) articulated, "We now believe that the selection of the contents of the portfolio is an evolving process shared by child and teacher." (para. 10). Teachers also need to recognize that portfolio requirements may need to vary from year to year in recognition of the needs and abilities of the students and the expectations and circumstances of their community.

To best demonstrate the growth of learning, it is important that the portfolio contain multiple products related to the same outcome (Jones, 2001; Lustig, 1996; Hessler & Kuntz, 1992). The inclusion of baseline data is also important to identify the growth that has taken place (Schipper & Rossi, 1997), while the inclusion of more than one stage of a piece of work assists in

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identifying how the learning occurred (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). Different types of work are needed to represent the six language arts, and can also demonstrate different learning styles and other personal characteristics (Lustig, 1996). Although many products will be included in the portfolio, these do not need to be evaluated as they already should have bee at the time of completion. What should be evaluated is the reflection included with each sample. A part of the reflection should also discuss why that sample was included, reasons such as having worked hard on it, finding it challenging, or it was personally satisfying (Mahoney, 2002).

Further personal insight can be included regarding study habits, dispositions, and particular talents (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). Results of surveys and inventories may be included for this purpose. In evaluating the portfolio, teachers and students may agree to awards marks based on a checklist to be fulfilled.

Other items that many teachers and students felt should be included in the portfolio and were appropriate to evaluate for quality included a table of contents or a form of reflection on the overall portfolio which could be in the form of an introductory letter or a concluding statement (Porter & Cleland, 1995; Johnson & Rose, 1997). These elements also help a student to organize their work and prepare for the conference (Santa & Glazer, 1995). Strickland & Strickland (1998) have their student write a "a letter of introduction to their portfolio, a 'Dear Reader' letter . . . In it, they ask for reader comments and they provide blank pages in the back of the book for that purpose . . ." (p.109).

They also discuss post-conference reflection by the students, providing valuable feedback to the teacher and initiating an opportunity for goal setting by the students.

The inclusion of goal setting in the portfolio can reinforce student ownership (Schipper & Rossi, 1997). As an element of the portfolio they should be discussed at the regular preparatory conferences, encouraging their review. "Because goals are noted on the Conference Form, they remain part of the record. At each conference, students can evaluate whether they have met the goals they set during the previous conference (Schipper & Rossi, 1997, p. 71). They also advise that goals must be specific, attainable, and relevant to learning goals.

Strickland & Strickland (1998) discuss the importance of the appearance of the portfolio to the students. "Part of the celebration was the look of the portfolio itself. The packaging and layout of the portfolio become extremely important to students – they're proud of the contents and they want the packaging to present their ideas as well." (p. 110). Teachers may wish to discuss with students whether they want to develop criteria for assessing this characteristic. There are several learning outcomes that would apply to this activity.

There is also value in assessing the student's skill in presenting their demonstration portfolio, as this particularly represents speaking and listening skills. Many tools are available to identify and evaluate performance, but as always, students must be made aware of the criteria and be provided an opportunity to practice during the regularly scheduled interim conference.

A Sample Portfolio Process

Introduction

Instead of saying, "There is no final exam for this course," say, "There is a final project instead of an exam for this course. That project is a portfolio that you will work on throughout the final course, completing a finished project to present in the final weeks of the course."

In the three years of the courses, students should prepare **six** demonstration portfolios, **two** each year – one at mid-semester that could be considered a "milestone" portfolio and useful for developing and practicing the selection and presentation skills required for the final course portfolio. At the end of each year, student should prepare a demonstration portfolio to be shared (with the class, or a significant guest) during the time set aside for portfolio celebration. This could be a time when students from other courses would be writing final exams. All six portfolios will be assessed. The mid-semester portfolios from each year and the final portfolios from 10-3 and 20-3 are to be considered ***assessment FOR learning*** while the final portfolio for 30-3 is to be considered ***assessment OF learning***.

As each portfolio will have a different purpose, and be assessing a different set of outcomes in the different grades, there will need to be unique assessment tools applied to each. These tools may be similar in structure, but have different content to match with the curricular outcomes for each specific course. The evaluation criteria must be made clear to students before they begin creating their portfolios, and the expected standards clearly identified. This may be done by including their input in the selection of criteria and description of standards.

Organization and Timeline

First weeks:
1 Create curricular awareness
   i   Display curriculum – on wall and copies for students
   ii   May choose to rewrite outcome together in student friendly language

   iii Introduce learning and assessment vocabulary – display, create personal glossary or posters
   iv Outcomes quiz/treasure hunt – example from Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center available in Word at http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Priorities /guide/05-OutcomesandStandardsQuiz.doc

2 Define portfolio – purpose is to measure growth and record achievement
   i   Throughout course will create a ***working portfolio*** in which artifacts and reflections are stored
   ii   ***Milestone Portfolio*** will be created at mid-semester as a developmental experience towards creation of the final demonstration portfolio
   iii ***Demonstration Portfolio*** will be created and celebrated at the end of the course

3 Create baseline
   i   Include personal exploration – e.g. learning styles, personality characteristics,
   ii   Work samples – may include from past years, or may choose to create some common work as a form of diagnostic assessment
   iii Reflection on the curriculum – to identify future learning path with students,
   iv Goal setting

Throughout course:
1 Regularly connect activities with learning outcomes – e.g. learning log, outcome tracker
   i   Keeps students (and teacher) aware of purpose of assignments and activities
   ii   Helps define focus for activities
2 Regular reflective practice – both peer and self reflections
   i   Develop vocabulary of reflection
   ii   Connect to learning outcomes
   iii Focus on growth
   iv Develop critical capacity – including specificity

3 Regular portfolio time – may be daily, weekly, bi-weekly, but needs to be part of classroom routine
  i To collect evidence – need more than 1 version of each artifact to demonstrate growth
  ii For student to practice self-assessment, reflection, and identification of learning
  iii Promote peer reflection and interaction
  iv Student teacher conferences
  v Create classroom culture of reflection to support portfolio

4 Establish assessment/evaluation vocabulary, standards, and procedures
  i Link to curriculum
  ii Develop assessment vocabulary – may post or create personal glossaries
  iii Develop rubrics and/or checklists collaboratively
  iv Promote and practice self- and peer-assessment

5 Provide practice for students to present portfolios
  i At mid-term reports – share with adult attending conferences
  ii With a peer before class presentation

Mid-term:

1 Milestone/practice portfolio – to demonstrate two examples of growth
  i Select evidence that demonstrates the growth
  ii Reflection to identify relevant learning outcomes and how growth occurred
  iii Share the evidence and reflection – with teacher, peers, or at report card conferences
  iv Assess the effectiveness of the portfolio
  v Review and reflect on the creation and sharing processes – planning towards demonstration portfolio at end of course

At End of course:

The demonstration portfolios for 10-3 and 20-3 are to be considered *formative* in nature and will be evaluated differently than the demonstration portfolio for 30-3, which will be considered *summative* as it is the final evaluation of the three year course of studies.
1 Celebrate portfolios and learning

  i Students present portfolio – to class, to a significant guest
  ii Replaces final exam – schedule for time when other classes would be writing exams
2 Evaluate presentation/sharing
  i Checklists to identify required elements of the presentation – such as introduction . . .
  ii Rubrics to evaluate quality of selected elements – such as communication, listening responses
3 Students complete reflection on the sharing process
  i Evaluate own performance
  ii Provide feedback on the portfolio process
4 Evaluate portfolios – self, peer, teacher?
  i Checklists to identify required elements of the portfolio
  ii Rubrics to evaluate quality of selected elements – such as reflection, organization . . .

Scheduling Recommendations

It is recommended that the first 2 weeks of the courses be spent in establishing classroom routines and inviting students to get to know themselves and others and establishing the portfolio.

Critical to the success of any portfolio process is a celebration of accomplishments at the completion of the course.

Evaluation of the Portfolio

*Do **NOT** re-evaluate work included in the portfolio as it has already been evaluated as an activity/assignment – evaluate the depth of the reflection on why that work was included and what learning it demonstrates.*

*Students **MUST** be involved in this process – in choosing what is evaluated and how it will be evaluated.*
  e.g. checklists and rubrics
    selection of criteria to be used
    self and peer evaluation

*Students **MUST** be made aware of the expectations relating to the portfolio at the beginning of the course to enable them to effectively accumulate their evidence and reflections.*

Items included should be represented by at least 2 drafts – to clearly demonstrate the learning and growth.

Items included should ensure coverage of all *6 language arts* and all *5 General Learning Outcomes*.

Remember that the portfolios for 10-3 and 20-3 are *formative*, as students will have further opportunities to refine their process and product, and that the portfolio for 30-3 is *summative*, as it is the culmination of the 3 years of courses.

The portfolio is intended to be a representation of the student's growth over the course.

Interim/in-progress:
* Baseline items
    * May simply check off as completed
    * May use as opportunity to practice vocabulary and develop rubric together
* Reflections on assignments activities
    * May choose to use prompts
    * Could initially check off as done, then work on discussing characteristics of effective reflection such as mentioning specifics and focusing on growth and move to evaluating the level of effectiveness of student reflections
* Goal progress reports

Milestone portfolio:
* Selects two examples of learning
* Supports view of learning with at least two pieces of evidence relating to each
* Sharing of milestone portfolio
* Post-sharing reflection with consideration of implications for demonstration portfolio

Portfolio Tools

A variety of tools are available to assist with portfolio development. And samples are available in the appendix.

The following are examples of tools to assist with portfolio development.

Portfolio Planning for Students – 2 pages

Discussing My Learning – 1 page

Portfolio Items record – 1 page

Feedback from Students on Portfolios – 1 page

Portfolio Evaluation – for student/teacher conference – 2 pages

Possible Conference Preparation Prompts – 1 page

Possible Post-Conference reflection Prompts – 1 page

English 10-3, 20-3. & 30-3
Portfolio Planning for Students

What is a ***portfolio***?

The *Encarta English Dictionary* defines a portfolio as:

> *the contents of a portfolio, especially as representing somebody's creative work*

For many years we thought of portfolios as belonging to artists, but now we include the creation of other types of work as well. The work and assignments that you did in this class are **creations** that represent your learning in this course. We are now going to select from the many things you did in this course to create a portfolio that demonstrates your learning.

Throughout this course we have worked on one major project from each of the five literacy components. These are listed below:

Media	internet safety brochure
Everyday	letter to editor/editorial
Workplace	career biography
Family	reading poster
Land as text and local issues	website evaluation

We also did other smaller activities, including reading and responding to the textbook, worksheets to prepare for the projects, and individual novel reading. You may also want to consider any changes in **how** you worked on a particular assignment or activity,

Your task is to prepare a ***portfolio*** of your work that ***demonstrates*** what you accomplished and/or learned in this course. This could include and ***knowledge*** (facts and information) that you gained, ***skills*** (ways of doing things) that you developed, or ***attitudes*** (ways of thinking) that developed throughout the course.

To ensure that you represent all of the important areas of this course, complete the chart on the back of this page. You are asked to identify **one** assignment or activity from **each** of the following categories that represents something that you learned, and to **briefly** identify the learning (knowledge, skill, or attitude) demonstrated by it. Some assignments and activities may be used more than once.

	Assignment or activity	What I learned from it
Component		
Media		
Everyday		
Workplace		
Family		
Land as text and local issues		
General Learning Objective		
Exploring		
Comprehending		
Managing		
Creating		
Celebrating		
Language Art		
Reading		
Writing		
Viewing		
Representing		
Listening		
Speaking		

Discussing My Learning

I have chosen to include _____

because _____.

It show that I learned _____

_____

Before doing this I used to _____

_____

But now I _____

_____

This could help me in the future to _____

_____

_____

Portfolio Items Record

Date	Assignment/Project Identification	Key Learning

Feedback from Students on Portfolios

The following questions may help students to reflect on their activities throughout the course. However, they need to be discussed, and not just given to students as a checklist.

I revised the work I put in my portfolio.

I am more aware of the importance of revising my work.

I chose a sample of my most important piece of work from a variety of options and gave reasons for my choice.

I chose a sample of my best piece of work from a variety of options and gave reasons for my choice.

I chose a sample of the piece of work I had the most trouble with from a variety of options and gave reasons for my choice.

The portfolio was a chance to show what I know and can do.

I learned from revising my tests and quizzes

Now, I feel I can express myself better.

I learned when to ask for help.

The teacher and my friends gave me helpful feedback in order to revise my work.

I explained what I learned and how I improved in the comment cards.

I learned what elements the portfolio should include (cover letter, table of contents…).

The portfolio improved my average grade.

The student-teacher conferences helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses better.

My grade should not be based on tests and quizzes only.

The workload was fair.

Three goals that I would set for myself for the next year are:

1. _____

    _____

2. _____

    _____

3. _____

    _____

Adapted from English Inspectorate, Pedagogical Secretariat, Ministry of Education, Israel as found at
http://www.anglit.net/main/portfolio/app1-11.htm

English 10-3, 20-3, & 30-3   Name _____

Portfolio Evaluation
For student/teacher conference

For each question, circle 'Yes' or 'No' as it applies to your portfolio. In the box directly below the questions, identify the evidence that supports your choice of 'Yes' or the element that needs to be added to change your selection of 'No' to a 'Yes'.

You will then discuss your evaluation and compare it with that of your teacher.

	Student	Teacher
Question:	Yes No	Yes No
Evidence/missing element:		
Question:	Yes No	Yes No
Evidence/missing element:		
Question:	Yes No	Yes No
Evidence/missing element:		
Question:	Yes No	Yes No
Evidence/missing element:		

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Question:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evidence/missing element:				

Possible Conference Preparation Prompts

Explain how you have kept your portfolio organized and why you chose to keep it in this order.

What thing in your portfolio are you most proud of?

What item would you most like to remove from this collection? Why?

Of all the assignment included here, which one was the hardest for you? Why?

Which assignment would you most like to redo? Why?

What have you been working on to improve? Has it improved? Why or why not?

What general areas do you think that you need to work on to improve your future work? Why?

What is the one thing you would want someone to notice about your portfolio? Why?

Do you feel that this collection of work really reflects your abilities and what you have achieved this year/semester/term? Why or why not?

What kinds of pieces have you selected for your portfolio?

What can you do now that you couldn't do before?

What does it show about you as a learner?

What was your purpose in choosing this topic/project?

What obstacles did you overcome to make it meaningful?

If this is a "best work" piece, explain the process used to make it your best work.

Two reasons that I chose this item are . . .

I want you to notice . . .

Next time I might . . .

Why should this sample be included in your portfolio?

How does this sample meet the criteria for selection for your portfolio?

What would you work on if you had more time?

What would you like your guest to know about or see in your portfolio?

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Possible Post-Conference Reflection Prompts

Debriefing after the conference is an important step in helping student to internalize the benefits of portfolios, as well as provide valuable feedback to the teacher for future planning. Students may also wish to have feedback from those they shared their portfolios with. Suggestions for both follow.

For students

If you could change anything about this portfolio system, what would it be? Why?

Before our conference I was worried about . . .

I was anxious to share . . .

During the conference I felt . . .

I really liked it when . . .

The best thing the teacher told me was . . .

After the conference I felt . . .

The biggest thing I learned was . . .

The next time I have a conference I will . . .

Before the conference I felt . . .

The best part of the conference was . . .

Now that the conference is over I feel . . .

The best part of my conference was . . .

Did the portfolio help you to be more organized this year?

Did you feel more responsibility for your work?

Advice I might give to another student is . . .

For those viewing the portfolio

Which part of the portfolio did you like best? Why?

I am most impressed by . . .

My favourite entry in the portfolio is _____- because _____(name) shows strengths in the following areas . . .

Recommendations I would make for next time . . .

Appendices

Appendix 1 - English Language Arts –3 Student Profile

Development of these courses was based on a study of attendance and graduation statistics. This course sequence was developed for the estimated 30% of Northwest Territories students who need to learn through a different approach from that of the existing English Language Arts courses (ECE, 1992).

Since this time, the population of the NWT has continued to evolve and diversify. These courses can provide opportunities for English Language Learners to develop foundational skills for continued learning, the workplace, and life.

Students will enter English 10-3 at a wide range of ability levels and the teacher will need to adapt the outcomes to suit the capacity of each student.

Typically the student in English 10-3, 20-3, and 30-3:

- ꞏ will be 15 years of age or older
- ꞏ has no identified learning difficulties, but will be functioning at several years below grade level
- ꞏ has personal problems and may also possess limited skills for coping with these problems.
- ꞏ has adult responsibilities in his or her home life
- ꞏ may speak English as a second language, and in addition, may not possess a strong first language.
- ꞏ attends school sporadically
- ꞏ lacks essential basic skills but possess decoding skills; students are reading, but below grade level (**Emergent literacy development is beyond the scope of these courses**.)
- ꞏ has experienced little success in school and lack a strong sense of self worth, particularly with regard to school.

These courses provide the opportunity to expand the definition of student success.

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Appendix 2 – What Adolescents Deserve: Principles for Supporting Adolescents' Literacy Growth, Douglas Fisher

What Adolescents Deserve: Principles for Supporting Adolescents' Literacy Growth

1. Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read.

The account of Kristy and Nick's day shows adolescents reading inside- and outside-of-school print such as textbooks, paperbacks, magazines, and Web sites. Yet national assessments provoke concern about the amount of such reading among adolescents. For instance, the 1996 NAEP findings indicate that about one quarter of the tested adolescents reported daily reading of five or fewer pages in school and for homework. As students grow older, the amount of time they read for fun declines. About one half of the tested nine-year-old students reported reading for fun on a daily basis, whereas only about one quarter of the 17-year-old students reported doing so. Literacy research and professional judgment support at least four reasons for providing adolescents access to inside- and outside-of-school reading materials they can and want to read.

- *Time spent reading is related to reading success.* If students devote some time every day reading connected text, their word knowledge, fluency, and comprehension tend to increase. Reading continuously for a brief part of each day is a small investment for a large return.
- *Time spent reading is associated with attitudes toward additional reading.* Students who habitually read in the present tend to seek out new materials in the future. These students are on the way to lifelong reading.
- *Time spent reading is tied to knowledge of the world.* Combining materials such as textbooks, library books, paperbacks, magazines, and Web sites provides full accounts of phenomena, new vocabulary, and up-to-date information. These materials permit readers to expand and strengthen their grasp of the world.
- *Reading is a worthwhile life experience.* Readers can find comfort and delight in print. Vicariously stepping into text worlds can nourish teens' emotions and psyches as well as their intellects.

Providing opportunities to achieve the outcomes just listed is accomplished through a network of educators, librarians, parents, community members, peers, policy makers, technology providers, and publishers. These groups

affect middle and high school students' access to wide reading by shaping the following elements:

- *Time.* An often overlooked—yet essential—component of access to reading is the time available for it. Adolescents deserve specific opportunities to schedule reading into their days.

- *Choice.* Choosing their own reading materials is important to adolescents who are seeking independence. All adolescents, and especially those who struggle with reading, deserve opportunities to select age-appropriate materials they can manage and topics and genres they prefer. Adolescents deserve classroom, school, and public libraries that offer reading materials tied to popular television and movie productions; magazines about specific interests such as sports, music, or cultural backgrounds; and books by favorite authors. They deserve book clubs, class sets of paperbacks, and personal subscriptions to magazines.

- *Support.* Time and choice mean little if there is no support. Support includes actions such as bringing books to the classroom, arousing interest in them, orally reading selections, and fostering student-to-student and student-to-adult conversations about what is read. Adolescents deserve these supports so they will identify themselves as readers and take advantage of the times and choices that are offered.

2. Adolescents deserve instruction that builds both the skill and desire to read increasingly complex materials.

Kristy and Nick Araujo tackled their assignments with a few basic reading and writing strategies. Outlining text passages and looking up an unfamiliar word like *dispel* in the dictionary are some of strategies Nick and Kristy used in their studies. However, these teens will need to expand their strategies to handle increasingly complex material now and in the future. In addition, Nick's history as a struggling reader indicates he will need extra help if he is to grasp future concepts successfully. Adolescents need well-developed repertoires of reading comprehension and study strategies such as the following:

- Questioning themselves about what they read;
- Synthesizing information from various sources;
- Identifying, understanding, and remembering key vocabulary;

• Recognizing how a text is organized and using that organization as a tool for learning;
• Organizing information in notes;
• Interpreting diverse symbol systems in subjects such as biology and algebra;
• Searching the Internet for information;
• Judging their own understanding; and
• Evaluating authors' ideas and perspectives.

Many teaching practices are available for supporting adolescent learners as they apply strategies to complex texts. For example, teachers who introduce some of the technical vocabulary students will encounter in a chapter help reduce comprehension problems, and students help themselves by independently previewing passages and discerning the meanings of unfamiliar words. Study guide questions and statements that prompt students from literal understandings to higher order ones also foster comprehension. When teachers inform students while the guides are being phased out, adolescents can appropriate for themselves the thinking strategies the guides stimulated.

Middle and secondary schools where reading specialists work with content area teachers in the core areas of science, mathematics, English, and social studies show great promise. For example, a reading specialist's work with a social studies teacher to map ideas during a unit on the Aztec, Inca, and Mayan cultures can become the basis for teaching students to map ideas as an independent study strategy. The CAL recommends that content area teachers and reading specialists work together to effectively support adolescents' development of advanced reading strategies.

Developing students' advanced reading skills is insufficient if adolescents choose not to read. Unfortunately, students' attitudes toward reading tend to decline as they advance into the middle grades, with a particularly disturbing impact on struggling readers like Nick. Attitudes toward reading contribute to reading achievement.

Caring teachers who act on adolescents' interests and who design meaningful inquiry projects address motivational needs. For example, Kristy was excited about independently researching events of the Great Depression that affected Cassie's life in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Based on her experiences in this class, Kristy knew she would have an attentive audience for

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discussing her research and a considerate teacher supporting and evaluating her demonstration of knowledge. Mrs. Mangrum regularly fostered discussions of multicultural literature, and she expressed sincere interest in her students' wide ranging cultural and ethnic differences, learning styles, and needs for respect and security. In addition to having the whole class read and talk about one particular novel, Mrs. Mangrum provided students access to various books for self-selected reading on their own. She gleaned books from her own classroom collection, students' recommendations, and a close working relationship with her school librarian. Adolescents deserve classrooms like Mrs. Mangrum's that knowingly promote the desire to read.

3. Adolescents deserve assessment that shows them their strengths as well as their needs and that guides their teachers to design instruction that will best help them grow as readers.

National-level mandates on education such as Goals 2000 and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the United States require that states develop standards for instruction and assess student achievement of the standards. In some states these measures are being used to determine the type of diploma students receive and whether or not students will even graduate. Although state assessments are useful in monitoring the achievement of standards, they rarely indicate specific teaching-learning experiences that foster literacy development.

Adolescents deserve classroom assessments that bridge the gap between what they know and are able to do and relevant curriculum standards; they deserve assessments that map a path toward continued literacy growth. For instance, when Nick began writing his essay about a famous person, he did not seem clear about the expected standards. He probably would have benefited from understanding how writing this particular essay connected with the world beyond the classroom. He could have used lessons on how to accomplish expectations. He might have benefited from examining papers that reflected the expected standards. And he could have profited from a rubric or scoring guide that clearly articulated the standards for evaluation.

Conferring with his teacher and classmates about how his efforts fit curriculum standards also might have promoted Nick's writing. During such conferences he would have opportunities to assess his own writing, set specific goals, and decide on strategies for achieving his goals. Further, Nick

would benefit from maintaining a record of his efforts in something like a portfolio to help gauge his reading and writing growth and plan appropriate actions. Emphasizing relevance and self-improvement in classroom assessment encourages adolescents to invest themselves in learning. It helps them understand how to control the rate and quality of their own literacy growth.

Effective assessments are crucial for students who come from environments that differ from Kristy and Nick's. Using tests simply to determine which students will graduate or which type of diploma students will receive especially disadvantages adolescents from homes where English is not the first language or where poverty endures. It wrongs those most in need of enriched educational opportunities.

In sum, the CAL believes that adolescents deserve classroom assessments that

- Are regular extensions of instruction;
- Provide usable feedback based on clear, attainable, and worthwhile standards;
- Exemplify quality performances illustrating the standards; and
- Position students as partners with teachers evaluating progress and setting goals.

4. Adolescents deserve expert teachers who model and provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension and study strategies across the curriculum.

Like masters with apprentices, expert teachers immerse students in a discipline and teach them how to control it. Expert teachers engage students with a novel such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* in Kristy's language arts class or a topic such as the presentation of self in Nick's psychology class. Then they teach reading, writing, and thinking strategies that enable students to explore and learn about subject matter. Reading and subject matter teachers often collaborate to provide such instruction.

If Kristy's teacher, Mrs. Mangrum, were teaching self-questioning as a strategy, she might first take a chapter of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and model queries such as "What became clear to me?" and "I wonder why Cassie didn't complain to her teacher about the school bus driver running them off the road." Mrs. Mangrum would explain how she arrived at answers to her questions, thinking through the process aloud. She would explicitly

demonstrate how to ask and answer productive questions during this stage of instruction.

Next Mrs. Mangrum and Kristy's class might produce questions and answers collectively, again thinking aloud. At first they might stay with the chapter Mrs. Mangrum began with, or they might move to another. Together the students and teacher would explain and comment on what they were doing. Additionally, Mrs. Mangrum might provide written guides for students to question themselves, exploring and experimenting with the strategy on their own. She also might design small group assignments that encourage students to reflect on self-questioning, sharing how they used it and difficulties they overcame.

Eventually Mrs. Mangrum would expect Kristy and her classmates to apply self-questioning on their own. She would remind students to question themselves while reading other novels and passages later in the year. Throughout this cycle of instruction, she would have students assess how well they were accomplishing the strategy. Research on expert teachers has produced an image of decision makers effectively orchestrating classroom life. Expert teachers help students get to the next level of strategy development by addressing meaningful topics, making visible certain strategies, then gradually releasing responsibility for the strategies to the learners. Adolescents deserve such instruction in all their classes.

5. Adolescents deserve reading specialists who assist individual students having difficulty learning how to read.

In the early 1900s standardized tests in the United States revealed large numbers of adolescents reading well below expectations. This finding sparked many educators and members of the public to develop programs for adolescents that included remedial instruction in reading classes and modified instruction in regular subject-matter classes. Federally funded programs to compensate for the effects of poverty on achievement later were instituted for reading, writing, and mathematics instruction.

National-level data continue highlighting the presence of adolescents like Nick with reading needs. For instance, 13 percent of fall 1989 first-year higher education students in the United States were enrolled in courses devoted specifically to remedial reading. The high school dropout rate, which is related to literacy difficulties, was 11 percent in 1993. Race,

ethnicity, and economic status continue to be strongly associated with reading achievement. Although the number of secondary schools that assist adolescents who struggle with reading is declining, most schools still provide programs. These include widely varying provisions such as special education classes, after school tutoring, and content reading integration.

Reading difficulties do not occur in a vacuum. Adolescents' personal identities, academic achievement, and future aspirations mix with ongoing difficulties with reading. Because literacy promises to enhance individuals as well as society, adolescents struggling with reading deserve assistance by professionals specially prepared in reading. The CAL recommends services that include the following:

- Providing tutorial reading instruction that is part of a comprehensive program connected with subject matter teachers, parents, and the community;
- Structuring challenging, relevant situations in special reading classes and in subject matter classrooms where students succeed and become self-sufficient learners;
- Assessing students' reading and writing—and enabling students to assess their own reading and writing—to plan instruction, foster individuals' control of their literacy, and immediately support learners when progress diminishes;
- Teaching vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and study strategies tailored to individuals' competencies;
- Relating literacy practices to life management issues such as exploring careers, examining individuals' roles in society, setting goals, managing time and stress, and resolving conflicts; and
- Offering reading programs that recognize potentially limiting forces such as work schedules, family responsibilities, and peer pressures.

6. Adolescents deserve teachers who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers, respect their differences, and respond to their characteristics.

Adolescents demonstrate substantial differences. In the Araujo family, Nick's interests in film and the outdoors differed from Kristy's preferences for athletics and teen culture. Nick tended to struggle with and avoid

school-based reading and writing tasks; Kristy generally excelled with and enthusiastically approached them.

Viewing members of one family in relation to another calls attention to additional differences. Factors such as family heritage, language, and social and economic position contribute to the variation that students regularly display during reading and writing activities.

Differences also are apparent when individuals are considered one at a time. Nick often was preoccupied in one class, English, but highly engaged in another, psychology. Kristy hated how her science teacher conducted class but enjoyed language arts. Nick and Kristy probably acted slightly differently from day to day in all their classes depending on what was happening in their personal worlds.

Adolescents deserve classrooms that respect individuals' differences. To promote respect, teachers encourage the exchange of ideas among individuals. They regularly set up paired, small group, and whole class arrangements so that everyone can have his or her voice heard. Believing that everyone has something to offer, they organize instruction so students of diverse backgrounds share their insights into course topics. One of the reasons Kristy eagerly researched the Great Depression was that she anticipated a productive discussion the next day.

Respectful classrooms are safe enough for students to take risks when expressing themselves publicly. No rudeness, put-downs, or ugly remarks are allowed. Learners address others courteously and expect courteous treatment in turn. They disagree without being disagreeable, contesting others' ideas without personal insults.

Respectful classrooms also display positive expectations. Teachers believe that students who are taught appropriately can meet rigorous standards. They acknowledge conditions outside of class that might interfere with learning, but they inspire teens to be resilient and take charge of their lives. Learning failures are unacceptable.

Along with respect, individual adolescents deserve teachers who respond to their characteristics. Responsive teachers address the mandated curriculum while engaging students in self-expression. To illustrate, Nick's five-paragraph report on a famous person could be extended several ways. Nick could inquire into Davy Crockett through interviews, library materials, and textbooks as well as through the Internet. He could enrich his investigation

by examining legendary aspects of Crockett or he could look at Crockett's role as an icon of individualism. Nick could supplement his essay by representing Crockett through a poem, poster, readers theatre, or skit. Teachers often limit such choices to manageable options, but they offer choices and supports for accomplishing them.

In sum, adolescents deserve more than a centralized, one-size-fits-all approach to literacy. They deserve teachers who establish productive conditions for learning; move into individuals' worlds with respect, choice, and support; and move out to allow growth. ,

7. Adolescents deserve homes, communities, and a nation that will support their efforts to achieve advanced levels of literacy and provide the support necessary for them to succeed.

For adolescents, growing in literacy means being continually stretched. Because of this, adolescents deserve all the support they can get, not only from school but from their families, communities, and the nation.

Parents play an important role. They help adolescents extend and consolidate their literacy by engaging them in discussions about what they read, responding sincerely to the ideas they write, and making printed materials available. Parents become partners with educators in supporting their adolescents' growth.

Members of the local community often are partners with adolescents. Libraries, religious groups, and after school programs are centers for community workers and volunteers to assist adolescents with homework, tutor individuals with learning difficulties, and initiate book discussion groups. Businesses become partners with schools by providing mentors and role models as well as funds for buying books and recognizing achievements.

Adolescents preparing for the 21st century deserve new forms of collaboration among educators. Community colleges, technical schools, and universities can offer input and assistance. Professional organizations working together and exploring relationships among reading, writing, and learning may lead to new educational directions. The educational community can demonstrate that adolescent literacy is important.

The many dimensions of adolescent literacy are addressed best in school reform and restructuring that place the growth of students at the center of every activity. Environments of high expectations, inquiry, and decision making encourage students to refine the reading and writing abilities they

have and take the risks necessary to grow. Adolescents deserve new perspectives on what it means to know a subject and to display that knowledge. Surface changes to schools involving scheduling and required courses are not enough to fully support adolescents' advanced reading and writing.

Finally, the CAL believes that the literacy achievement of adolescents cannot grow to new levels without changes in governmental policy. Emphasizing the achievement of early readers has not produced adolescents who read and write at high levels of proficiency. Adolescents deserve increased levels of governmental support. This includes appropriate funding for intervention services in the upper grades, the point in most comparisons at which children in the United States perform less well. School libraries can be the center of efforts to encourage wide reading, but for decades they have seen a steady decline in funding. Governmental support also involves exerting leadership to mobilize initiatives among parents and local communities.

The government can support ongoing staff development for helping students grow in literacy as they grow in content knowledge. Furthermore, government can support literacy research concentrating on the upper grades where literacy proficiencies are less well understood than those at the lower grades.

A Commitment to Growth

Public and educational attention long has been focused on the beginnings of literacy, planting seedlings and making sure that they take root. But without careful cultivation and nurturing, seedlings may wither and their growth becomes stunted. We, as members of the International Reading Association Commission on Adolescent Literacy, urge policy makers, administrators, business people, community members, parents, and educators to commit themselves to supporting adolescents' literacy in the ways presented in this position statement. Adolescents deserve enhanced opportunities to grow into healthy, strong, and independent readers and writers.

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Appendix 3 - Essential Skills (HRDC)

The Essential Skills identified throughout the curriculum refer to those identified by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and can be found described at http://srv600.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/esrp/english/general/home_e.shtml.

The nine Essential Skills identified are:

Reading Text	Use of Documents
Writing	Numeracy
Oral Communications	Thinking Skills
Working with Others	Computer Use
Continuous Learning	

It is important to remember that these skills are transferable skills, not technical skills. That is, they are important in varying degrees for all occupations, and are not knowledge that would be specific to a limited range of occupations.

In the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* at http://srv600.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/esrp/english/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, each of the nine Essential Skills referred to in the profiles is broken down into components and a description and examples are given for each of the components at the different levels. The relevant aspects of these descriptions are included in each of the nearly 200 Essential Skills profiles that have been developed for the various occupations of the National Occupational Classification. To date, profiles have been completed for all occupations requiring a high school education or less. Research is ongoing to complete occupations requiring university, college or apprenticeship training.

Complexity rating - In addition, many skills have been given a complexity rating from *typical* to *most complex*. It is possible for a task to be defined as both typical and complex as it may be typically associated with the occupation and yet complex in nature. Complexity ratings for both *typical and most complex* tasks are usually given as ranges.

Essential Skills Descriptions

Reading Text – 5 levels - refers to reading material that is in the form of sentences or paragraphs and generally involves reading notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports, or journals

Types of text
Forms – with at least one paragraphs of text
Labels – with at least one paragraph of text
Notes, letters, memos
Manuals, specifications, regulations
Reports, books, journals

Purpose for reading
To scan for specific information
To locate information
To skim for overall meaning

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To get the gist
To read the whole text to understand and to learn
To read the full text to critique or to evaluate

Document Use – 5 levels - refers to tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics are given meaning by their spatial arrangement

Based on three dimensions of document use:
Complexity of the documents(s)
Complexity of finding/entering information
- information search
- information entry
- thinking process
Complexity of information use

Writing – 5 levels - includes writing texts and writing in documents and non-paper-based writing

Based on three dimensions of writing:
Length and purpose of the writing
Style and structure
Content of the writing

Length of writing
Texts requiring less than one paragraph of new text
Texts requiring more than one paragraph
Longer texts

Purposes for writing

To organize	To remember
To keep a record	To document
To inform	To request information
To persuade	To justify a request
To present an analysis or comparison	To present an evaluation or critique
To entertain	

Numeracy – 5 levels - refers to the workers' use of numbers and their being required to think in quantitative terms

Numerical calculation is based on two dimensions:
- *operations required* refers to the actual math operations used, including the number of different operations, the number of steps of calculation, and the difficulty of the calculations
- *translation* refers to turning a work problem into a set of mathematical operations in order to apply math to solve a problem

Numerical calculation is rated within four application settings:
- money math
- scheduling or budgeting and accounting math
- measurement and calculation math
- data analysis math

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three sections consider the use of math skills:
- mathematical foundations used
- how calculations are performed
- measurement instruments used

Oral Communication – 4 levels - pertains primarily to the use of speech to give and exchange thoughts and information by workers in an occupational group

4 dimensions:
- range and complexity of communication functions
- range and complexity of information
-range and complexity of communication context
- risk levels in failing communication intent

Types of communication

Listen with little or no interaction	Interact with customers/clients/public
Speak with little or no interaction	Interact with suppliers and servicers
Interact – both listening and speaking	Participate in group discussions
Interact with those the worker supervises or directs	Present information to small groups
Interact with supervisors/managers	Present information to large groups

Purposes for oral communication

To greet	To take messages
To provide information/explanation/direction	To seek information
To receive information/explanation/direction	To obtain information
Situations in which the worker has to pose questions	To reassure
To co-ordinate work with that of others	To comfort
To discuss – exchange information/opinions	To persuade
To facilitate	To animate
To instill understanding and knowledge	To instruct
To negotiate	To resolve conflicts
To entertain	

Modes of communication used - may include one or more of the following four media
- in person
- using a telephone
- using a two-way radio or similar means
- using specialized communication signals

Environmental factors affecting oral communication are also considered

Thinking Skills – 4 levels - Differentiates between six types of interconnected cognitive functions

problem solving
- complexity of the problem
- complexity of identifying the problem
- complexity of identifying the solution steps
- complexity of assessing the solution

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decision making
- consequence of error
- reversibility of the decision
- adequacy of the information available
- whether there is a set procedure or decision tree to follow
- whether there is a body of similar, past decisions to compare to
- the extent to which judgment is required to make an appropriate decision

critical thinking - currently under development

job task planning and organizing
- the extent of variety in work activities
- whether the task sequence is provided to the worker or determined by the worker
- whether priorities are provided to the worker or determined by the worker
- the extent to which the day's work plan is disrupted
- the extent to which the worker's own work plan must be integrated with the work plans of others
- the number of sources for work assignments
- the extent to which the order of those tasks sequenced by the worker makes a difference to total efficiency

significant use of memory - does not include a complexity rating
3 types: - purposeful memorization of procedures, codes, parts number, etc. – memorization through repetition
- remembering information for brief periods – e.g. minutes or hours
- unique events in which "learning" occurs from one exposure

finding information
- the complexity of locating the desired information
- the complexity of extracting/processing the information

Working with others –   Examines the extent to which employed work with others to carry out their tasks

Types of work contexts
- work alone – providing products or information to others
- work independently – not physically alone, but work independently, coordinating their work with that of others
- work jointly with a partner or helper – coordinates and cooperates with only one other coworker at a time
- work as a member of a team – a group of workers produce a product or accomplish a task through combined effort and organized cooperation

Participation in supervisory or leadership activities – may include one or more of the following activities
- participate in formal discussions about work processes or product improvement
- have opportunities to make suggestions on improving work processes
- monitor the work performance of others
- inform other workers or demonstrate to them how tasks are to be performed
- orient new employees
- make hiring recommendations
- make hiring decisions
- select contractors and suppliers

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- assign routine tasks to other workers
- identify training that is required by, or would be useful for, other workers
- deal with other workers' grievances or complaints

Computer use –   5 levels - indicates the variety and complexity of computer use within the occupational group

Considerations include:
- level of interaction with the computer
- level of knowledge of software required
- using and/or managing a network
- number and range of tasks
- selection and evaluation of required software
- customization of software
- integration of software components
- knowledge of hardware components and systems

Continuous learning –   examines the requirement for workers in an occupational group to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge

Description of learning
- training in job-related health and safety
- obtaining and updating credentials
- learning about new equipment, procedures, products and services

How learning occurs
- as part of regular work activity
- from co-workers
- through training offered in the workplace
- through reading or other forms of self-study
- through off-site training

Profiles may be found at http://srv600.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/esrp/english/general/all_profiles.aspx

Appendix 4 - Regie Routman's Optimal Learning Model Across the Curriculum

Who Holds Book/Pen	Degree of Explicitness/Support
Teacher/Student	↓ **Demonstration**
Teacher/Student	↓ **Shared Demonstration**
gradual handover of responsibility	
Student/Teacher	↓ **Guided Practice**
Student/Teacher	↓ **Independent Practice**

Optimal Learning Model Across the Curriculum

DEPENDENCE   **INDEPENDENCE** ▷

Ongoing Assessment & Celebration

To Learners		*With Learners*	*By Learners*	
I DO IT	**WE DO IT**		**WE DO IT**	**YOU DO IT**
Demonstration	**Shared Demonstration**		**Guided Practice**	**Independent Practice**
teacher	*teacher*		*student*	*student*
• initiates • models • explains • thinks aloud • shows how to "do it"	• demonstrates • leads • negotiates • suggests • supports • explains • responds • acknowledges		• applies learning • takes charge • practices • problem solves • approximates • self-corrects	• initiates • self-monitors • self-directs • applies learning • problem solves • confirms • self-evaluates
student	*student*		*teacher*	*teacher*
• listens • observes • may participate on a limited basis	• listens • interacts • questions • collaborates • responds • tries out • approximates • participates as best he can		• scaffolds • validates • teaches as necessary • evaluates • observes • encourages • clarifies • confirms	• affirms • assists as needed • responds • acknowledges • coaches • evaluates • sets goals
instructional context	*instructional context*		*instructional context*	*instructional context*
• thinking aloud • reading and writing aloud • direct explanation	• shared reading and writing • interactive reading and writing • shared read aloud • scaffolded conversations		• guided reading and writing experiences • partner reading and writing • reciprocal teaching • literature conversations	• independent reading and writing • informal conferences • partner reading and writing • homework and assignments

The vertical text in the center column reads: "handover of responsibility"

Ongoing Assessment & Celebration

Teaching Essentials by Regie Routman (Heinemann; Portsmouth, NH); © 2008

Appendix 5 - Desirable Employee Traits (as supplied by BHP)

Knowledge (What you need to know)
- High school completion
- Safety training/Certificates in Specialized areas
- Essential Skills (Reading, Writing, Document Use, Numeracy, Computers, Working with Others, Problem Solving, Continuous Learning, Use of Computers)
- Computer skills (Outlook, Word, Excel. PowerPoint)
- Knowledgeable in their field of work

Attitude (How you do your job – Behaviours)
- Workplace ethics
- Gets along with others (Team player, good Collaborator, supportive Caring)
- Dependable, reliable
- Safe – minimizes risks, safety oriented
- Action oriented, goal oriented, achievement oriented
- Flexible, versatile
- Creative, resourceful and innovative
- Responsible and accountable (cost wise, accept responsibility for their decisions)
- Approachable, calm
- Confident, believes ion their ability and others believe in them
- Looks for Opportunities, takes initiative (proactive) wants to improve, grow, learn new things
- Trustworthy and honest
- Committed to company vision, mission, and charter, dedicated
- Hardworking, ambitious and energetic
- Works with integrity (do what you say you will do)
- Positive attitude, willingness to be open minded

Skills and abilities (What you do, Performance)
- Technical skill mastery
- Previous experience in the field of work
- Organizational skills (works efficiently, effectively)
- Interpersonal skills (able to get along with difficult people)
- Communication skills (active listener, incorporates feedback)
- Able to work under pressure
- Able to work with minimal supervision
- Competent in 9 Essential skills
- Problem solver (seeks others points of view, open minded, implements solutions, uses experience to solve complex issues)
- Manages conflict (confront difficult situations)
- Establishes boundaries
- Uses good judgment
- Maintains confidentiality

Other category (We would like to include other areas that would help students gain an advantage to being hired by industry and once hired, maintain their job)
- Job interview and follow up
- Etiquette ion the job (manners, professional demeanor, hygiene)
- Phone etiquette (giving your name when you answer the call)
- Courtesies on the job (notifying Supervisor if you are sick
- Money Management/Financial/Credit Rating
- How to give proper notice to terminate a job

Appendix 6 - College courses that may be accessed with ELA 30-3

Among the courses that students may be eligible to enter with English 30-3 are:

Small Business Development

Office Administration
        Computers in the Workplace Program
        Community Office Procedures Program

Personal Support Worker

Trades Access

Heavy Equipment Operator

Camp Cook

Traditional Arts

Appendix 7 - "What it all means" from Blogs, wikis, podcasts and other powerful web tools for classrooms – Will Richardson

9 What It All Means

So now that you have a good idea of the tools and the pedagogies, what is going to be the impact on education? Obviously, that's a huge question, but it's important to try to put some meaning to the message.

No doubt, the classroom of the Read/Write Web is going to be defined by two unstoppable trends in the use of these technologies. First, with more than 10 billion pages already on the Web, more and more content both new and old will continue to come online. If you don't believe that, witness the announcement by Google that it plans to scan and digitize more than 50 million books from five of the largest research libraries from around the world. In the words of New York Public Library CEO Paul LeClerc, that in itself "is one of the most transformative events in the history of information distribution since Gutenberg" (Graham, 2004). Add to that the desire of Internet Archive.org founder Brewster Kahle's wish to do the same to the 500 million volumes in the Library of Congress and there is little doubt that the Internet will continue to explode as the most comprehensive source of information in history. As author Thomas Friedman writes in *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, "we are now in the process of connecting all of the knowledge pools in the world together" (Friedman, 2005). There's no doubt that the ability of our teachers and students to use that knowledge effectively is of the highest importance.

The second trend is that, more and more, the creation of that content is collaborative. Just about every major software package on the market these days has collaborative tools built in; witness the "Shared Workspace" features of Microsoft Office software that allow teams of people to share and develop documents, presentations, and spreadsheets to name a few. And the open-source development of operating

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systems such as Linux or browsers like Mozilla's Foxfire is setting a model for collaboration that more and more businesses and even schools are tapping into.

When today's students enter their post-education professional lives, odds are pretty good that they will be asked to work with others collaboratively to create content for diverse and wide-ranging audiences. Compare that to an educational system that, by and large, asks those same students to work independently for a very narrow audience (usually the teacher who gives the grade) and the disconnect becomes painfully clear.

Right now, teachers are employing Weblogs and wikis and the like in ways that are transforming the curriculum and are allowing learning to continue long after the class ends. They are tapping into the potential of a World Wide Web that is a conversation, not a lecture, where knowledge is shaped and acquired through a social process, and where ideas are presented as a starting point for dialogue, not an ending point (Siemens, 2005). In case after case, the walls of the classroom are literally made irrelevant by the creation of communities of learners that span oceans, races, genders, and generations.

NEW LITERACIES

In the age of the Read/Write Web, the explosion of information and online technologies demands a more complex definition of what it means to be literate. For more than a hundred years we have defined being literate as being able to read and to write. And although those core abilities are still central to learning, they are no longer enough to ensure understanding.

First, due in large measure to the ease with which people can now publish to the Internet, consumers of Web content need to be editors as well as readers. Print sources have always carried with them the assumption that the content included had been reviewed or checked before published. Books, newspapers, and magazines all have editors whose job it is to make sure the information is verifiably accurate. But today, anyone with an Internet connection can now publish without any prior review. Although this is good in terms of creating a wider body of knowledge to draw from, it obviously requires that we teach our students to become more active consumers of that information instead of just passively accepting it as legitimate. Editing, then, means being a critical reader and viewer, not simply accepting what is presented.

Second, to truly take advantage of the power of the Read/Write Web, we must be literate in the ways of publishing. In many ways, we now truly have a free press that the framers of the Constitution envisioned, where everyone can have a voice. We must then teach and model the ways in which ideas and products can be brought online.

Third, in the process, we need to have the ability to work closely with others in virtual environments. Within that collaborative model are literacies regarding communication skills and process.

Finally, we need to know how to manage the information that we consume. Our students will be required to collect, store, and retrieve relevant information throughout their lives, and we need to give them the skills to do so effectively and efficiently. Throughout this book, we have looked at how the tools can support these literacies.

THE BIG SHIFTS

So, the classroom of the Read/Write Web is one of seamless transfer of information; of collaborative, individualized learning; and of active participation by all members of class. It is marked by the continuous process of creating and sharing content with wide audiences. In many ways, these technologies are demanding that we reexamine the way we think about content and curriculum, and they are nurturing new, important shifts in how best to teach students.

Big Shift #1: Open Content

It used to be that schools and teachers "owned" the content they taught in their classrooms. Most curriculum was taught from a textbook with a few added resources copied from various sources thrown in. Perhaps there was a filmstrip (remember those?) or a video that added to the discussion. Outside of what schools provided, however, students had limited access to additional information about the subjects they were studying. There were newspapers and magazines, and there were books in the school and public libraries, but all of these resources required more time and effort to find and consume than the average student wanted to expend.

Today, however, that information is as far away as a Google search, and the breadth and depth of content are staggering. The information students can access is more current as well, rendering many textbooks passé. In fact, many teachers and students have begun writing their own textbooks online using the collaborative

spaces now available to them, cobbling together links and annotated reading lists that future classes can build on as well.

More and more, the "code" to teaching and learning that schools once held dear is disappearing, creating open-source-type classrooms in which everyone contributes to the curriculum. This openness leads to the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #2: Many, Many Teachers, and 24/7 Learning

As our access to content increases, so does our access to other teachers. Many other teachers, in fact. The Read/Write Web allows us to connect to not just other Science, or English or Social Studies teachers, however. Instead, we can now find biochemists, scholars of Faulkner, and Civil War reenactors to bring into the classroom. Teachers who harness the potential of these tools are tapping into the knowledge of primary sources such as authors and historians and researchers. And the asynchronous nature of these tools, the ability to interact with content when it's most convenient to do so, means that learning can take place anytime we're ready for it.

As I've said, in my four years as a blogger, I have found hundreds of teachers, people who through their willingness to share their ideas and experiences have informed my practice and my thinking. The rich diversity of cultures, geography, and professional expertise that these sources provide have dramatically broadened my understanding of my own teaching and education in general. Without question, it has been the most extensive and effective learning experience of my life.

But unlike the traditional student–teacher relationship, the student no longer just consumes the content provided by the teachers. Through my Weblog, I am able to be a part of the conversation and, in turn, perhaps teach my teachers through my reflections and ideas. This creates an opportunity for Big Shift #3.

Big Shift #3: The Social, Collaborative Construction of Meaningful Knowledge

For generations, the typical expectation of our students has been that they work independently ("do your own work") and produce that work or content for a limited audience, usually just the teacher giving the grade and perhaps the other students in the class. The work, once it was finished, was exactly that . . . finished. Think of how few opportunities there were for anyone outside the classroom walls to "read" those efforts, whether they were essays or experiments or

projects or performances. Think of how much of student work today simply ends up in the recycling bin at the end of the year.

Today, however, the Read/Write Web makes it easy for students to produce work in truly collaborative ways for large audiences. That work can have real purpose and real meaning for the audience that reads and consumes it. Information created and published in this way takes on a new social context that requires us to change the way we think about what we ask our students to produce, not as something to be "finished" but as something to be added to and refined by those outside the classroom who may interact with it.

So, this idea that we can continue to interact with our ideas in collaborative ways leads to the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #4: Teaching Is Conversation, Not Lecture

By publishing content to a wide audience, we say "these are my ideas, my understandings of the world." That in itself is empowering, and with it comes an expectation that our voices will be heard. On their own, our students are learning that their voices matter, that people are listening and responding, and that their ideas count. To not embrace those feelings by continuing to look at curriculum-as-lecture is to fight against a tide that we will not be able to keep back.

As George Siemens says, "Ideas are presented as the starting point for dialogue, not the ending point" (Siemens, 2002). That is the new expectation of the Read/Write Web. To remain relevant, educators are going to have to respond accordingly. By inviting students to become active participants in the design of their own learning, we teach them how to be active participants in their lives and future careers.

This shift from lecture to conversation requires the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #5: Know "Where" Learning

In the Read/Write Web classroom, it's not as essential to know what the answer is as it is to know where to find it. In the past, when information was not as accessible, it was important to memorize facts and formulas. Today, however, factual answers are only a few clicks away. Take for instance the Q & A service that Google instituted in April of 2005 (http://answers.google.com/answers/). Type in a question, and up pops an answer.

Knowing "where" learning also means knowing where to find those good teachers mentioned above. As we move away from text-books and more "closed" sources of information, we need to be able

to create our own texts from many different content providers such as Weblogs, wikis, Websites, discussion groups, and more. So teachers and students have to understand and be able to employ the many different ways to find information on the Web.

And, obviously, it's not enough simply to find these sources. We must be able to identify which of the sources we do find are worthy of our attention. To do so, we need to accept the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #6: Readers Are No Longer Just Readers

In an era of textbooks and printed resources, we could be pretty sure that the content we consumed had been checked and edited before being published. Reading, for all intents, was a fairly passive experience. Today, however, readers cannot assume that what they are reading has been reviewed by someone else with an eye toward truth and accuracy. The Web is now a printing press for the masses, and so readers themselves must learn to be critical consumers of the information they consider. They must be editors with all of the information literacy skills they need to discern good information from bad.

And now given the opportunity to converse and interact with the sources they find, readers must also be writers. We must be able to engage those sources in debate and discussion as one way of assessing their worth.

In all these ways, reading is becoming a more active undertaking, no longer neatly compartmentalized in books and handouts. There is valuable knowledge to be found in thousands, maybe millions of places, which leads us to Big Shift #7.

Big Shift #7: The Web as Notebook

As the Web becomes more and more of a source of content for our teaching and learning, it also renders paper less and less effective as a way to capture the information we find relevant. Hence the Read/Write Web. Weblogs and wikis and the like were borne out of the need to save and organize the digital ideas we find interesting so that we can annotate them with our own interpretations and easily return to them when we need to.

And not only can we collect links and text in our Web notebooks, we can include audio, video, photography, and more. In fact, many educators see the Web as the perfect home for electronic learner portfolios that can be shared easily with audiences of peers and mentors. To make that happen, we have to accept Big Shift #8.

Big Shift #8: Writing Is No Longer Limited to Text

As we move away from plain text on the page, we move toward a totally new definition of what it means to write. Certainly, in the short term at least, it remains crucially important to be able to express oneself in writing using words. But it is hard to deny that more and more we have become a multimedia society, relying heavily on television to communicate the important ideas of our culture. According to a study by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2004, fewer than half of American adults now read literature (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004) and that number continues to decline.

But today the technologies of the Read/Write Web allow us to write in many different genres. We can write in audio and video, in music, and in digital photographs, and even in code such as JavaScript, and we can publish all of it easily for extended audiences. As blogger Alan Levine and others say, we can combine many of these forms of writing into a process of "Rip, Mix, and Learn," taking a piece of content here and another piece there, combining it to produce powerful text and nontext messages and interpretations (Levine, 2004).

These genres of writing expand the ways in which we can prove our knowledge and lead us to the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #9: Mastery Is the Product, Not the Test

The Age of the Read/Write Web is an age not only of participation but of production. Think about the limited ways in which we could show mastery in the "old" days. For the vast majority, mastery was exhibited by passing the test. When you think about it, schools are one of the very few places where someone is said to have "mastered" a subject by getting 70% of the test correct. And most of the tests were not based on what you could do with the information. Would you feel safe in a world where kids were awarded drivers licenses by just passing the written test? I didn't think so.

Today, however, students can display mastery in countless ways that involve the creation of digital content for large audiences. Even more traditional forms of showing mastery through performance or putting together projects can now be easily published to the Web in a variety of ways. More and more, the concept of a cheap, accessible, electronic online portfolio is coming to fruition. Leading to the next Big Shift.

Big Shift #10: Contribution, Not Completion, as the Ultimate Goal

All of these technologies allow students and teachers to contribute their own ideas and work to the larger body of knowledge that is the Web. Instead of simply handing in countless assignments to teachers to be read, graded, handed back, and most likely thrown away, we can now offer our students a totally new way of looking at the work they do. It's not meant for the teacher or the class or even the school. It's meant for the world, literally. It's not meant to be discarded or stored in a folder somewhere; it's meant to be added to the conversation and potentially used to teach others.

Obviously, these changes create all sorts of challenges for educators, challenges to the educational system as a whole, and challenges to the traditional roles of teachers in the classroom. First, the educational system itself will be under pressure to respond to the ability of students to learn 24/7 from a variety of sources. The neatly organized four- or eight-period day, 180-day school year may no longer be the most effective structure to teach students in a world filled with easy access to information. The vertical model of a teacher disseminating information and knowledge to students may not be very effective in an environment in which learning is a much more horizontal or collaborative undertaking. But those types of systemic changes will be a long time in coming.

More important will be the response of classroom teachers, for the classroom of the Read/Write Web will in many ways require a redefinition of what it means to teach.

First, teachers will have to start to see themselves as *connectors,* not only of content, but of people. Once again, the access to much greater amounts and more timely information means that it will be imperative for educators to model strategies to not only find worthwhile and relevant content, but to use primary sources in the classroom. We can invite people from around the world to engage in discussions and even content creation with our students, and our teachers must be willing and able to find and use these sources effectively.

Second, teachers must become *content creators* as well. To teach these technologies effectively, educators must learn to use them effectively. They need to become bloggers and podcasters, to use wikis and the other social tools at their disposal. Just like anyone else trying to learn a new language, educators must practice the words, or in this case, the tools. Chris Dede of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard says, "Teachers who use interactive media professionally will find they rapidly develop learning styles and strengths similar to

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those of their students" (Thatcher, 2005). And they might even come to enjoy it.

Connecting and contributing are not enough, however. Teachers also need to become true *collaborators*. And not just with each other, but with their students as well. For all of the reasons I've previously cited, teachers must begin to see themselves more as learners alongside their students. The New 'Net allows us to tap into the creativity and knowledge of thousands if not millions of teachers and students, and we have to be willing to learn together, both in the classroom and online, to effectively give our students the most relevant experience we can. We can't pretend to know everything any more, and we can't be effective if we don't tap into the work of others who are willing to contribute their ideas and content as well.

Fourth, teachers need to think of themselves more as *coaches* who model the skills that students need to be successful and motivate them to strive for excellence. Ultimately, players on the field take responsibility for their own performance, and they learn through practice and reflection. That needs to be true of students now as well. We teach students the skills of the Read/Write Web and motivate them to seek their own truths and their own learning.

Finally, teachers who use the tools of the Read/Write Web need to be *change agents*. The ideas will not be easily embraced or readily supported at first because of the transparency that they create. So teachers need to find ways to use these tools to move away from the more traditional paradigms of instruction on their own terms in their own ways and recruit others to follow suit.

JUST THE BEGINNING

We are at the beginning of a radically different relationship with the Internet, one that has long-standing implications for educators and students. The coming years will be marked by a flood of new innovation and ideas in teaching, most born from the idea that we can now publish and interact in ways never before possible. In reality, we now have a Read/Reflect/Write/Participate Web, one that will continue to evolve and grow in ways not yet thought of, spurred by the efforts of creative teachers who recognize the potential to improve student learning.

If you have come this far, I'm hoping you have a new box of tools and techniques to take full advantage of the opportunities this new Internet presents. Here is where the real learning, and the real fun, begins.

Appendix 8 - "The crazy project lady comes home" – Marcia Lubell from "Why am I doing this?" by Giselle O. Martin-Kniep

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The Crazy Project Lady Comes Home

Marcia Lubell
edited by Diana Muxworthy Feige

Over the years I had long given up that [traditional] model and had become known in my school as "that crazy project lady." More and more I tried to connect everything I taught to literature. I also was an early convert to writing process . . . I felt isolated in my efforts to reform my classroom and my teaching practices.

Marcia Lubell

Marcia Lubell is presently Teacher Coordinator of the English Department at Yorktown High School in Yorktown, New York. She has been teaching secondary English Language Arts for twenty-five years, primarily at the high school level. She is active as a consultant and staff developer in her district and others, as well as an instructor for the Northern Westchester Teacher Center, teaching courses in assessment and portfolio design. Marcia is coauthor of English for the Disenchanted *and* Language Works *and script writer for CD-ROMs on classic texts such as* Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, *and* The Scarlet Letter.

Marcia Lubell writes that the Hudson Valley Project reinforced her belief that assessment drives curriculum. Through the craftsmanship of designing portfolios, Marcia reinvented her classroom. More specifically, the articulation of focused, explicit outcomes changed Marcia's teaching practices; she realigned her curriculum and instruction in order to help her students achieve these newly stated

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outcomes. Marcia then saw the power of her students' reflections—
their ongoing thinking about their strengths and weaknesses
as readers, writers, and thinkers. Marcia now believes that if
you give students the opportunity, structure, and guidance for
self-reflection they will revel in it, documenting their growth
and challenging themselves for future learning.

Sometime in the dark ages of the 1960s, I started teaching high school English. The model I followed was the one I had seen at college: I was the "expert" and asked all the questions; my students were vessels to be filled with the knowledge that only I could dispense. Though I experimented with trying to tie my course together with thematic ideas, basically I taught each strand separately—grammar on Monday, vocabulary on Tuesday, literature on Wednesday, writing on Thursday. Friday was test day. Throughout the week, the students sat rigidly in rows, and I did not allow talking except in response to my predetermined questions. We studied literature chronologically or by genres and were very concerned with textual analysis. It was almost as though I thought of my students as potential English majors.

A few decades later, in the 80s, I had long given up that model and had become known in my school as "that crazy project lady." More and more I tried to connect everything I taught to literature. I also was an early convert to process writing. I began experimenting with portfolios five years ago but except when I was working with one special colleague, Ruth Townsend, with whom I collaborated very closely, I felt isolated in my efforts to reform my classroom and my teaching practices. However, several years ago I was given the opportunity to join the Hudson Valley Portfolio Project, and that has made all the difference.

I was very cocky as I walked into that large room at Stony Point that first summer. After all, I had sample portfolios in my tote bag; my students already profited from the use of portfolios. I thought I had learned from experience all that I needed to know to make me an effective teacher. My first shock came as I listened to the presentation on outcomes. "What were our outcomes?" Giselle kept asking. We couldn't know what it was we wanted to accomplish with our portfolios unless we (1) predetermined exactly what it was we wanted our students to know and be able to do, and (2) designed our portfolios to reveal whether or not our students had accomplished these outcomes.

I was stunned. I had never really thought of that. We studied books, wrote essays about the books, developed projects designed to extend my students' creative ability to work with the ideas in those books. What more did I need?

Thinking in terms of outcomes was an epiphany for me; it changed my entire approach to designing my instruction and presented me with a whole new way of thinking, a new world of teaching. At the initial project meeting, we formed collaborative groups to formulate outcomes for our classrooms. My group came up with two major outcomes, one dealing with comprehension, the other with communication. They were:

1. Students should demonstrate their ability to react and interact with understanding with complex texts.

2. They should demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively, personally, analytically, and creatively.

Both of these outcomes seem very straightforward and hardly earth shattering. Indeed, many groups thought of similar outcomes. Yet the process of arriving at these outcomes proved critical in helping us to establish ownership of the project and to begin the thinking needed to develop a portfolio that would allow students to reveal their attainment of these general outcomes.

Together, we developed a series of indicators for these outcomes. For the comprehension outcome, the indicators included having students demonstrate that they read with depth of insight by collecting facts and ideas, discovering relationships, making inferences, making critical judgments, analyzing, evaluating, and drawing conclusions. For the communications outcome, we decided that students must express their ideas critically, organize their thoughts logically and coherently, and develop their ideas with appropriate and adequate support.

Again, none of this was utterly new. Intuitively, all of us had tried to move our students toward knowing and doing these things. However, spelling out the outcomes and indicators was especially significant for me. I went home from the first several days of that summer session eager to reexamine my units to ascertain the implications of this thinking about outcomes in my daily practices. What would it actually look like in my classroom to work from outcomes? I soon realized that I needed to make my indicators more concrete in order to design assignments that would truly lead to the attainment of each outcome. For comprehension, I determined that students needed to

Demonstrate that they could follow the twists and turns of the plot or development of idea in a text

Understand the motivations and personalities of the characters

Understand the effect of events and people on the characters

Appreciate stylistic elements and their effects

See connections to their own lives

For the communications outcome, I determined that students needed to

Demonstrate they could write convincingly

Develop a thesis and support it sufficiently

Use accurate and appropriate facts, details, examples, and direct references to support a thesis

Compare, analyze, synthesize, and apply new information

Pay attention to voice and audience

Use sophisticated style, word choice, phrasing, sentence structure, sentence variety, and coherence

Develop logical, appropriate organization with a beginning, middle, and end

Develop an engaging opening as well as an "as a result" conclusion

Armed with this myriad of specific attributes, I was able to design specific lessons to teach the skills necessary to elicit these attributes and, through them, the larger comprehension and communication outcomes.

Early in my consideration of what teaching strategies to adopt to fit my outcomes focus, I became concerned with how I would assess student outcomes. I decided to incorporate baseline and exit tasks in my portfolio design.[1] These would graphically reveal students' growth both in literary analysis and in communication. They would also allow students to experience and become aware of the tremendous progress they made toward comprehending complex textual materials and communicating that understanding in sophisticated and well-organized formal, creative, and personal written responses.

In practice, what was most rewarding to me as a teacher of heterogeneous students was that this outcome-based approach was successful both for my less able and for my high-achieving students. One student, who required the help of our resource room and was a mainstreamed special needs student, reflected on his progress:

> My "Story of an Hour" essay isn't even in essay form. It is very short and doesn't get to the point of the story. However, when I read "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings," I understood the themes of the story. I used quotes to explain my understanding . . . I wrote it in essay form, and I got to the point. The last essay had run-ons; this one did not. My writing is totally different.
>
> It is like night and day. . . . Now that I am comparing my essays, I can't believe the difference . . . I think I have learned a lot this year. In the beginning

1. *Baseline tasks,* which I ask my students to complete before I give them any other instructions, help me find out what the students already know or are able to do. *Exit tasks* parallel baseline tasks, but are given to my students at the end of a unit or text to find out how much they've learned.

of the year I couldn't read a story and then write on it. Now I can do both. My grammar was terrible at the beginning of the year. I think my grammar is 1000 times better, but I still need some work on it. (Joseph Savastano, June 1994)

Another student, accustomed to being academically successful, was equally startled at her progress.

What boggles me is that I remember being somewhat pleased with my original baseline. It is only now that I can read over it and see the true mess that it really is. For one thing, the whole thing lacked direction. My initial opening sentence did little more than state that I had read a story and a poem. Because of this crucial error, the rest of my essay was entirely irrelevant because, in essence, I had never really proved anything . . . I merely rambled. . . . Despite the fact that I think I could have done a better job on my final piece, I must admit that it was a vast improvement over my initial attempts at this kind of writing. My final essay had direction; . . . my analysis of the two given works was much more advanced, both in organization and in presentation of argument. . . . I cannot get over how tremendous these differences are. I am thankful to be able to see true evidence of how effective this year's English course really was. (Sonia Werner, June 1995)

The focus on achievement of outcomes with very clear skill-based performance indicators led to a more accurate student self-reflection on growth and performance and changed my daily classroom practice in dramatic ways. Philosophically, the shift moved from the study of texts for their own sake toward developing the skills students needed to interpret with confidence *any* demanding text. By framing the course with baseline and exit tasks, I clarified for my students and for myself exactly what work my students needed to do during the year.

In addition, articulating the specifics of what the attainment of each outcome would look like in terms of performance indicators led me to reexamine each of my instructional units. I began to focus the units on tasks that would provide opportunities for students to develop comprehension and communication skills needed for the exit tasks. Thus, from the very beginning of my work with the Hudson Valley Project, I quickly realized that my task was not merely the design of a portfolio as an assessment tool but also the design of an entire outcome-based curriculum, with my assessment embedded within my daily classroom instructional practices. The cocky project lady was not so cocky anymore. I had quite a learning journey ahead of me, yet I also knew that I had already undergone a fundamental transformation.

A *Macbeth* Unit Serves as a Prelude to Portfolio Design

After the end of that first summer session, I worked on what was loosely known as my portfolio design. However, what I actually worked on was my classroom and unit design. I went back to each junior year unit and reworked

it around the idea of outcomes and indicators, letting the outcomes of the unit shape particular assignments. Each assignment would in turn ground and shape all the instruction for that particular text.

One example of such a unit was the study of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. My initial outcomes were the same for this text as for others: I wanted my students to be able to react to and interact with the text with understanding, and I wanted them effectively to communicate personally, analytically, and creatively about their understanding of the text. At the same time, I was interested in having them accomplish some outcomes specific to the issues raised by this play. I wanted them to understand and appreciate the effect of unlimited power on individuals—to internalize the corrosive effects of ambition, of the lust for violence, and of believing that the ends justifies the means. Most important, I was interested in guiding them to see the need to take responsibility for their actions and to understand the consequences that result from certain kinds of actions. Outcomes provided shape and unity to my approach to teaching texts. In a similar way, an authentic context provided my students with multiple opportunities to hone the skills they needed to attain the outcomes.

The context I established for the study of *Macbeth* was the collaborative creation of newspapers. In the past, as the "project lady," I might also have had students create a *Macbeth* newspaper, but the project would have occurred after the formal study of the play as an "add-on"—something separate from the serious study of the work: the analysis. Now the newspaper became the lens through which we studied the Macbeths and their abuse of power as well as their rise and fall from power. For example, when students completed act 2 of *Macbeth,* in which Macbeth murders the king and assumes the throne, students showed they understood the intricacies of the characters and events as they wrote news articles, in small groups, about Duncan's death, editorials eulogizing the kindly king's rule, and opinion pieces speculating on the causes of the murder and the identity of the murderer(s). After each act, groups returned to their newspapers and worked on relevant articles specific to the events that had unfolded. By the end of the study of the play, groups had a repertoire of newspaper articles from which to construct their final project piece, the *Macbeth* newspaper.

By focusing immediately on the unit project and by designing the project so that it reinforced the outcomes and indicators, I clarified the direction and purpose of the study without sacrificing anything of importance in the process. My assessment of student outcomes became thoroughly embedded within the fabric of my daily instruction instead of being an isolated event that occurred at the end of each unit. Students knew where they were going and how to get there. And so did I. Outcome-based classroom planning organized my teaching in ways that made sense to me and worked well for my students.

Yet without the impetus of the Hudson Valley Project, the continued en-

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couragement of participants, and feedback from group sessions and confer-
ences with Giselle, I never would have redesigned my classroom in this way.
One of the most helpful components of the project was that we were not aban-
doned to our own efforts after that one week in the summer. We met monthly,
either in caucus groups or as a whole, and we received regular feedback about
the development of our designs. We practiced what we were implementing in
our classrooms. We reflected on what we were doing and on our responses to
those changes. In one of these reflections, I summarized my own learning:

> As far as teaching practices are concerned, the major difference I see is that
> I am working backwards from clearly stated outcomes and have formulated
> in writing for myself and for my students exactly how we will master these
> outcomes. These units, articulated in my portfolio, are a major departure for
> me. While I have done many, if not most, of the same lessons before, I had
> never before clarified for myself what it was that I expected to accomplish
> with each of the tasks I set for students. It was useful for me as well as reas-
> suring. Instead of believing as I had for many years that all I was doing was
> "teaching books," one title after another, I saw the intuitive logic that had
> been there all along and felt pretty good about what I was doing and more
> sure of why.

Appreciating the Power of Student Reflection

The first year of the project was over. I was very pleased with the results of
my students' portfolios and the seriousness with which they had taken this ar-
duous task. I saw graphically displayed just how much growth my students
had experienced in the areas of comprehension and communication. More im-
portant, *they* could see their growth in black and white and, often for the first
time, realize that they could be successful communicators and that they had
developed dramatically in their competence in English. One particularly grat-
ifying example came from a student who had previously been tracked in a
nonregents class and felt inadequate when she first transferred into my Re-
gents class.[2] In her self-analysis, she alludes to the progress she made in cre-
ative and personal writing as well as in more analytical writing:

> I am pleased with my transition from English CR to English R. It is even
> more satisfying to know that my work has been critiqued by a Regents de-
> termined criteria. That I was, for the most part, successful, is a testimony to
> my overall growth as a reader, writer, and thinker . . . I'd like to say that
> generally, as a reader I have experienced a wide variety of literature—from
> stories like "The Story of an Hour" to novels such as "A Scarlet Letter." I've
> read old manuscripts—Macbeth—to modern plays—"The Death of a Sales-
> man." Each one has been a challenge in its own way. I have developed the

2. *Regents* are the New York State–mandated exit tests for a Regents diploma.

use and expression of writing personas. I can see, feel, act, and react as if I am the character. This is evident in my readers' logs and my successful writing of an original ending to *Catcher In the Rye* and Zeena's letter based on *Ethan Frome*. I have made great strides in the area of creative writing. I have learned to organize my thoughts and follow through with description and dialogue. This is seen in my parody "An Adventure of Hank Finn." I really enjoyed developing Hank's character and having him speak my thoughts. . . . As a thinker I have demonstrated increased appreciation of literature. I have shown this in my essay on the Abuse of Power and "My Editorial on Women" which was motivated by my reading and reflection on Lady Macbeth. In the former, I used the concept of abuse and substantiated it with specifics from Macbeth, and Night, comparing them with modern-day illustrations. (Adrienne Oshman, June 1994)

Adrienne's reflection on her own achievements reveals again how an outcome-based approach gives students multiple opportunities and needed skills to succeed. In fact, reflections such as Adrienne's were so compelling that they forced me to rethink my outcomes. In the second year of the project, I added a reflection outcome: Students will demonstrate that they can reflect with accuracy and understanding on their strengths and weaknesses as readers, writers, and thinkers.

From the beginning of my work with portfolios, I had always included student reflections, but I had not recognized the importance of training students to reflect with greater skill. Once I realized just how important reflection was to students' academic proficiency, I incorporated reflection into every aspect of their performances. Students reflected each time they wrote for me. I spent considerable time and energy in guiding students to create more precise analyses of their own products, and then to use those personal judgments to inform their own work so that they could improve and master the outcomes. They described their thought processes, their work habits, their satisfaction with certain aspects of each piece they created, their concerns and problems, and the new learning that resulted. With each succeeding attempt at reflection, students became more adept, more self-analytical, and more empowered. Again, baseline and exit samples were very revealing. Anthony Cacciola, an eleventh grader, wrote the following as his first reflection of the year:

Reading: I love reading but I have trouble with big projects.

Writing: I'm not very good at writing, and I usually can't handle long-terms projects. I have little imagination.

Thinking: I'm a slow thinker for things I don't understand. I'm fast at things I do understand. I need time to figure out things to write, like certain projects you need to make up a situation or a scenario; I can't usually do it at a normal speed because I have to think for a while.

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A short excerpt from his final reflection reveals just how far he had come, both in self-esteem and in reflecting on his work:

> I am very proud of myself . . . I have learned so many things about myself from doing this portfolio. I have learned that I was a horrible writer at the beginning of the year, but I have managed to bring my skill in writing up at this point. I think it took a good review of myself, in how I think about things and how I follow through with them to realize that I was able to do so much better than what I was doing. I think that I have definitely grown in one aspect; I now take my time and go over everything before I start to write or do something.

By the time students write reflections for their portfolios, they are able to comment very concretely and astutely on the degree to which their outcome-based work, culminating in the final portfolio, has changed their perceptions of themselves. The process works equally well for students of all ability levels. Just as we see the growth in Anthony's reflections, it is also clear in the work of a student accustomed to academic success. She writes,

> It is funny how growth kind of sneaks up on you. I honestly didn't realize how much I had changed as a reader, writer, and thinker until I was able to do this project. . . . I feel that my greatest and most substantial growth occurred in my essay writing. Here is where I learned to write more concretely, to focus, and to eliminate much of the unnecessary verbiage that would often infect my writing. . . . I think that one of the most important things about this year was the kinds of work that we did. I was able to experiment with English in ways that I never had before. Whether it was writing a handbook for the proper way to handle Native American culture (a final project for *When the Legends Die* by Hal Borland) or creating a video retrospective for *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, I found myself exploring English while using a variety of new and more innovative techniques. . . . Yet, despite all these things, I know that I still have quite a lot to work on. . . . I do have a tendency to 'go all over the place' and sometimes I fear that this habit of getting a little overwhelmed affects my work. . . . I have to work on pacing myself for many times I will spend literally hours on things that could have been done in a period. . . . This year has been an enormous challenge. It is really only now (it being almost June) that I am able to look back and see all that I have gained. . . . (Sonia Werner, June 1995)

Resolving Dissonance

The more involved I became with using portfolios to assess my students, the more I sensed a mismatch between what I needed to do to find out what my students knew and were able to do and the traditional English Regents exam. With my portfolio, students had multiple opportunities, crafted over time, to demonstrate their attainment of the comprehension, communication, and re-

flection outcomes. They could revise and learn from earlier mistakes; they could take the time necessary to perfect their work, to create finished pieces, to show what they really *could* do. With the traditional exam, particularly the 45 points of multiple-choice questions and the time-constrained essay questions, students were primarily revealing what they could *not* do—what they did *not* know.

The emphasis was all wrong. I decided to apply for a 35 percent variance in which I would seek to replace the multiple-choice sections of the regents examination (vocabulary, spelling, and reading comprehension), with the portfolio. To do that I modified my intended outcomes and my portfolio design. First, I blended my comprehension and communication outcomes with the New York State English Language Arts Standards—in which students were to demonstrate that they could read, write, speak and listen for information and understanding, for literary response and expression, for critical analysis, and for social interaction.

This required a number of changes in the portfolio menu, but I was willing to find the time and harness the energy to identify them because I could no longer live with the dissonance. I wanted to see if I could resolve the injustice imposed on my students. To accommodate the "information and understanding" standard, I invited students to include a piece from another subject. Many chose research papers in history, science reports, and so on. The "literary response and expression and critical analysis" standards were already richly represented by the students' creative and analytical written course work. In order to accommodate the "social interaction" standard, I required students to present their portfolios to groups of interested peers and adults.

I also was concerned that if I replaced the reading comprehension and vocabulary sections of the traditional Regents exam, I would miss the opportunity to assess those skills. This is where the baseline and exit tasks came in.

I was on a roll with these changes, increasingly convinced of their merits. Over time, I continued to change the portfolio to place more emphasis on the students' attainment of the articulated outcomes. I asked students to include a letter to the reader in which they articulated what they found meaningful in each book and their strengths and weaknesses as readers. They included reflections on their development as writers, readers, and thinkers, and I created specific rubrics for each portfolio category. I wanted the portfolio to be as full a mirror as possible of what students knew and could do. I wanted students to look at their portfolios and see themselves, past, present, and future.

Authentic Assessment and Its Response to the Challenge of Heterogeneity

Perhaps the most important change in the second year of the portfolio project resulted from the newly heterogeneous nature of the classes that were developing portfolios, composed of Regents and non-Regents students. Just as the

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outcome-based approach to my assessment and curriculum planning caused me to revamp my approach to teaching, the prospect of greater student diversity sent me back to the drawing board. I had certain bottom-line assumptions; I was determined that my classes were not going to be any less challenging for the brightest of my students than they had been before. However, I had to find meaningful ways to tap into the strengths of those who had not traditionally been a part of my Regents classes. By using more authentic, real-world group tasks, I hoped to address the needs of students at all ends of the academic spectrum.

To begin, I decided to modify assignments I had used in the past. First, I asked students to take a theme from *Macbeth;* develop it into a child-oriented moral tale about loyalty, the sharing of power, the limits of ambition, and so on; and work in pairs to create a book for an elementary school class. This project was truly an authentic task: it involved a real audience, a real product, an exhibition component, and a real-world deadline. Students found they had to consider their audience in determining how to write their story—how involved it should be, how much dialogue it should have, how to make it visually appealing, and how to read it in an interesting way to young children. They also had to pay closer attention to mechanics than usual to avoid the embarrassment of making a mistake in grammar or spelling in a book to be read by children. In preparation, they reviewed their own favorite children's books, analyzed the books' components, talked to a published children's book author, and considered very seriously their task of working with small children. They prepared questions to initiate discussion and worked hard at crafting their stories so they would be entertaining, visually attractive, and instructive.

As a result of this unit's reshaping and its encouraging success, I created other authentic group projects for a number of my literature units. For example, in the past, I had asked students to create a letter from the character Tom Black Bull to his school detailing the harm their educational methods had exerted on him (*When the Legends Die* by Hal Borland). Now I asked student groups to craft training manuals for new teachers of Native American students. Instead of asking students to write an essay on censorship for *Catcher in the Rye*, I asked them to create a booklet from the psychiatrists at Lubell Cozy Acres Rest Home to the Governing Board that discussed whether Holden Caulfield was ready to be released from treatment and sent home. When we read *Huckleberry Finn*, students prepared a video retrospective of scenes from the book that developed a particular theme and taped a panel discussion debating a controversial issue surrounding that theme. In the past, I would have asked them simply to write an analytical essay.

While both my traditional assignments and the new project assignments provided opportunities for students to demonstrate the comprehension and communication outcomes, the second set of assignments was more authentic, richer, multilayered, and engaging. Moreover, many of the new assignments required group work and therefore addressed the New York State Standard for so-

cial interaction in ways my individual essay assignments had not. As a result of assignments like these, students of different ability levels could participate successfully in far more demanding assessments of their comprehension and communication than I had ever witnessed before. They were making meaning from complex texts and communicating effectively with their audiences in personal, analytical, and/or creative ways. They were growing before my very eyes.

Yorktown High School Buzzes

After I applied to the state for the 35 percent variance, all of the eleventh-grade English teachers at Yorktown High School became involved in the project. For the first time in our school's history, the entire eleventh grade took the Regents exam, and more than 230 students used their portfolios as 35 points of their total score. In tabulating our results, we were pleased to find that students' scores on the portfolio section were very comparable to their performance on the more standardized portion of the exam; indeed, grades for the portfolios tended to be slightly lower, indicating the greater rigor of our portfolio assessments as compared to the state-designed portion of the exam. Moreover, we had a 90 percent passing rate overall.

Throughout the school, students worked together in heterogeneous classes, were challenged by the demands of the portfolio to perform at their optimum levels, and for the most part succeeded in meeting that challenge. It was exciting to watch the change in students' attitudes as the due date for the portfolios approached. Students who had never taken English as seriously as subjects such as science or math suddenly began focusing enormous energy on outdoing everyone else to make the content and appearance of their portfolios the very best they could. Droves of students sought extra help as they began sifting through the year's work to uncover promising pieces to rework for the portfolio. When conscientious students brought in completed portfolios with pages encased in plastic, students who had not done so took note and worked harder to keep up. As they considered the required exit task, they asked questions such as "I need another joining word to get me from one idea to the next. I'm bored with *also*. What other joining words could I use?"

> I think the poem is about child abuse, but the word 'romped' means played around according to the dictionary. Why can't I fit that meaning into my interpretation?

The entire school buzzed with talk of the portfolios. It was almost as though English had finally come of age. And I, the "crazy project lady," had finally come home. Suzanne Verneau, an eleventh-grade English teacher, noted:

> I can't believe how much learning is going on here. My students look at what they wrote at the beginning of the year and they can't believe that was their work. They have come SO far, and the portfolio is helping them realize exactly how far and in what specific ways.

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Looking Backward and Forward

Because of the very encouraging results of the 1995 portfolios and the success of our students in the Regents exam, the English teachers and I decided to apply for a 100 percent variance for 1996. We knew without doubt that the amount of work students put into the portfolios represented far more than the 35 points allotted to the 1995 variance. The Department of Education responded favorably. We are now one of a select number of high schools in New York who are exempt from New York State Regents exams.

The saga, though, does not end here. Revisions have become a way of life. While still struggling to help my students achieve comprehension, communication, and reflection outcomes, I added an additional outcome for the upcoming school years. My students must demonstrate their increasing ability to work independently. I am also designing more and more instructional strategies that require my students to take a greater responsibility for their own learning.

Clearly, my experience with the Hudson Valley Project has reinforced my belief that assessment drives curriculum. Portfolio assessment has provided me with a more sophisticated, authentic way of viewing student performance. Moreover, I have discovered that portfolio development and its basis in agreed-upon outcome compels me to develop an outcome-driven curriculum that reflects the same authenticity and focus as the portfolios. I have changed my daily classroom practices, the focus of my instruction, the projects I assign, and the nature of my demands for student performance. I have reinvented my classroom in order to help my students learn and achieve. The intricate instructional units now give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their competence in each of the outcomes.

Slowly but surely I am finding ways to show what students know and can do. I am finding ways to mirror who they are and who they can be. The journey has been exciting and valuable. I look forward to continuing to evolve as I devise more authentic ways for my students to become competent in essential language arts' skills. My students in many ways have been my teachers. I thank them and wish them well in their life journeys.

Appendix 9 - "Realizing the power of reflection" – Robin Grusko from "Why am I doing this?" by Giselle O. Martin-Kniep

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Realizing the Power
of Reflection

Robin Grusko
edited by Diane Cunningham

If we ask our students to become reflective practitioners, then we
must do so, too.

Robin Grusko

*Robin Grusko joined the Hudson Valley Project as an experienced
teacher of English and the coauthor of a book titled* Becoming a
Teacher: A Practical and Political Survival Guide. *Today, Robin
continues to teach English in grades nine through twelve at White
Plains High School and has just received a variance from New York
State for a heterogeneous Regents portfolio class. Her involvement in
the project has allowed her to become a leader in curriculum and
assessment innovation in her school and district. She now conducts
workshops on portfolio assessment, rubric development, and
reflection. Recently, she led a workshop called "Reflection Across the
Curriculum." Finally, Robin is working toward certification in
administration and supervision at Fordham University.*

*Robin Grusko's chapter illustrates what happens when a teacher
practices and models reflection herself to teach students to reflect on
their learning. It highlights the assumption that if assessments are
going to extend and produce learning, then they must require
students to self-assess, monitor, and reflect on their own
progress. Robin clearly shows that the reflective process
produces meaningful learning for her and her students.*

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Robin Grusko

Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

In the spring of 1993, I began my work with portfolios, unaware that a revolutionary change in my teaching, learning, and thinking was about to occur. I had heard of portfolios through various district workshops, I knew that the state of Vermont and the city of Pittsburgh had developed some fine models for assessments through portfolios, and I wanted to be part of the excitement. And so when my new chairperson introduced portfolios to my department—via the Pittsburgh and the Vermont models—I, along with a few other members of my department, created a portfolio for my classes. I see now that we were innocents in a land yet to be fully explored and discovered. I did not consider the outcomes I wanted the students to acquire, nor the various indicators that would measure whether or not my students had achieved those outcomes. That spring I truly "sprung" this portfolio on my students. They were not trained in reflection, nor were they familiar with rubrics. However, they approached the task with eagerness and created compilations of their work. I use the term *compilations* rather than *portfolios* because my students had not engaged in a reflective process. These early portfolios were really only poor prototypes for those that would follow. My students didn't create true portfolios until I became a member of the Hudson Valley Project.

During the first summer of the project, I wrote these questions in my journal: "How can I get my students to interact meaningfully/authentically with a piece of writing? How can that be measured and assessed?" By September, I had noted in my journal, "Is the portfolio merely product or is it process? It is process." Fundamentally, I knew that reflection was the primary difference between the portfolios I was developing in the project and those my students had compiled in the spring of 1993. It was a difference between the positivist, top-down approach and the constructivist approach. After creating my own portfolios based on specific outcomes during that first summer of the project, I realized that the key to using portfolios successfully was that the stakeholders—the students and the teachers—must make meaning through a process of creating, reflecting on, and evaluating that meaning.

This idea has made all the difference for me, and it is this idea that Giselle Martin-Kniep obviously understood. From the beginning, she asked the project faculty to become stakeholders, to make meaning of their own. Just as we were asking our students to put together portfolios, she asked us to create our own portfolios—a process that required self-reflection.

As a teacher, I had never really used a formal reflective process to analyze my own experiences. I had always promised myself that I would keep a journal, but those promises always seemed to go by the wayside. All of this changed when I joined the project. Now, almost three years later, it is apparent that if I had not taken up the practice of becoming reflective, if I had not been precise and analytical in thinking through my own learning, and if I had

not zealously kept a journal to record my journey, my students and I would not have grown as we have.

Most important, if I had not been keeping my own portfolio, I would not have been able to understand my students' journeys. Accountability and ownership of the learning process are two reasons for our success with portfolio assessment. The reflective process was the medium through which this success became possible. If we ask our students to become reflective practitioners, then we must do so, too. Following is the story of the journey my students and I experienced as we became reflective practitioners together.

The Process of Reflection: Using Rubrics, Process Statements, and Reflection Questions

Without rubrics, our students cannot become the reflective practitioners they need to be. How can we ask students to produce work that is exemplary if we do not provide criteria for exemplary performances? How can we ask our students to move from mediocrity to excellence if we do not share with them the indicators of success? Before I became involved in the project, I had thought of rubrics only as summative grading tools, not as assessment tools that can be used throughout the students' learning process. But once I recognized the use of rubrics—and, in fact, once I began to see that assessment and grading are not necessarily the same thing—I began to use and develop rubrics wisely. Now, I do not know how to teach without them. The success of my experience with portfolio assessment is directly tied to my experience with rubric development.

I began my first year with a writing rubric, but during the fall and early winter, I became concerned that my rubric did not address the criteria of a good reading response. Students were providing summaries of the stories, poems, and chapters that they read, but they were not connecting with the work in a meaningful way. Fortunately, the enforced solitude of snow days enabled me to write a reader response rubric. My students were pleased; since September they had been writing reader responses with no way to measure the effectiveness of their work.

The following student reflection, written after the introduction to and use of the reader response rubric, attests to how valuable this rubric was for many of my students:

> January, 1994: This year, in English, I feel my skills have been sharpened, and my work has, on the whole improved greatly. I am now reading the novels more closely. . . . When I look back at my responses to The Scarlet Letter [the first novel that the class read], I am amazed at how vague they are, and how much they seem like plot summaries. If one were to compare them to my responses to The Red Badge of Courage, one would be amazed at the difference in quality, as well as quantity. . . . Self-criticism is an important skill, because it gives way to change and self-improvement.

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During this same month, as I began to see my students' writing improve and the way that their use of rubrics guided their thinking about their writing, I wrote in my journal:

> January 25, 1994: I've been grading the midterm assessment essays, and I am really pleased. All the students feel that they have improved in their writing abilities—and in fact, their essays show this to be true, too. I have developed my research question finally: How does self-reflection aid a student in becoming a careful reader, writer, communicator? This is a really fascinating area of study. I need to speak to Giselle to ask her how I can research this in a finite manner. . . . Things seem to be coming together. Kids are really reacting well to my insistence on process. I'm pleased—writers are beginning to develop!

I was also coming to understand that my students needed more guidance in order to use these rubrics effectively. It was not enough to say, "OK, here is the writing rubric for this essay. Look at it. Think about how your writing fits on the rubric." I could see that I needed to get the kids actively involved, and so, out of my fascination with self-reflection and my desire to make the portfolio a success, the process statement was born. This became the backbone of my teaching and was to change the lens through which I taught and through which my students learned.

Process statements asked my students to analyze the process of the writing—to think about why they made the choices that they made; what the factors were for creating excellence; how they crafted their piece; and, after it was written, how they could make it better. I wanted students to understand that writing is a process—ever evolving and ever changing. I realized that my students would need specific guidelines, so we created these questions together to guide their reflections:

- How did I receive information for my essay?
- How did I organize the information?
- What was difficult for me?
- How will I resolve these difficulties in my next essay?
- Upon what can I improve? How can I improve?
- What can I do to make my writing better?
- What was easy for me? How can this continue?
- What do I know about my writing today that I didn't know before?
- How did I combat writer's block?
- Did I read it aloud?
- What are my areas for improvement?

These questions were the cornerstone of a newborn self-awareness. Initially my students were aghast at the idea that they could be considered real

writers. They had been taught that only people like Ernest Hemingway or Robert Frost were writers. However, their reflections that year proved that they had started to see themselves as writers. And, as they became adept at their ability to use rubrics and to analyze their writing, I realized that this self-analysis through the use of rubrics, process statements, and reflection questions was the key to becoming a reflective practitioner. In my journal, I wrote, "It is not the portfolio that is important; rather, it is the process of compiling the portfolio that has had ramification for the students."

One student's reflection confirmed my thoughts:

> Mrs. Grusko's emphasis on processing has helped me improve my skills as a reader, writer, and thinker. As a reader, I have learned to pay more attention to, and look out for details and symbolism. . . . Where I used to briefly explain something without providing many supporting details, I now use quotes as well as more descriptive words, so that I express exactly what I feel. Commenting on the essay and doing revisions have helped me become a better writer, because I see exactly where my mistakes are, and how to avoid repeating them. . . . My thinking skills have improved in much the same way as my reading ability. Now, I often find myself drawing comparisons between past events and my current situation. Also, I pay more attention to things that I used to infer as being trivial, because I now realize that these slight details are often of great importance.

As I became more comfortable using rubrics I discovered another way to facilitate students' reflection and thinking. Two of my journal entries chronicle my continued thinking and learning connected to rubrics:

> June 12, 1995: When the pace is heavy and an individual rubric cannot be created, a good exemplar may serve. In fact, it may even be better than the rubric, because it demands of the students a different cognitive skill. Sharing an exemplar and asking your students to extrapolate from it the guidelines (standards) to which they must achieve demands a higher level of thinking than simply placing the rubric in front of them.

> July 1995: My growing awareness of the need to give students plainly-stated guidelines has changed the way I teach. If students are given—at the outset of a writing assignment—the goals they must achieve, they will strive to do so. Rubrics, however, are not the only medium we can use to help our students understand our expectations. I have learned to use exemplars to ask students to extract from them the standards that they need to reach in their own writing. Anchor Papers: They serve, too, to show kids the range of the performance they can achieve on the various levels of the rubrics.

Providing rubrics, exemplars, anchor papers, and guiding reflection helped my students understand their direction, focus, and achievement. The ownership we took over our learning led us to a real understanding of who we

were and are as thinkers and learners. In fact, my students seemed to incorporate the very principles of self-reflection and self-analysis into their being once they were immersed in the process. Some of my students suddenly began to revise and rethink assiduously. They were really meeting with success; their self-esteem was rising, and so were their grades. In self-assessment essays written during January 1994, many students noted that the new techniques they were using in the class were helping them grow:

> I became a better writer when I entered Mrs. Grusko's class. I learned that there is never a final copy to an essay. When I received my assignments graded, I looked over what was wrong, corrected my mistakes and learned from each and every assignment. Learning is the basis of life besides that of having fun. Since there is no end to learning, that means the mind will live forever.

> Compared to the beginning of the year, my writing is clearer and more concise. The thing that has helped the most are the revisions. In the revision, I am able to clearly see where I have faulted, and I am then able to correct it. . . . Another thing that helps me are the self evaluation sheets we write. These allow me to think about where my essay is weak, or where there is strength.

Something revolutionary was occurring in my classroom. Students were thinking—and writing—of process, of revisions, of responses, of change. I began to wonder, Could portfolio assessment, with its emphasis on self-reflection, work with a heterogeneous population? In April 1994, I proposed to my chairperson that during the next school year I would take a group of heterogeneously grouped students through the portfolio process and on to the Regents examination.

My Venture into Heterogeneity

At that time, White Plains High School had a homogeneously grouped system of Regents and non-Regents classes. My proposal was accepted and a heterogeneous class was created. It had a carefully orchestrated mixture of twenty students of all ability levels; there was an extra period of English each day in the spring (a lab component) for every student; and a learning facilitator, Carolyn Tokson, was assigned to the extra period each day. Carolyn and I spoke throughout the summer and planned the course. Students would work in cooperative groupings. We felt that this would create a comfortable environment in which trust and respect would develop and nurture all those involved.

In September I embarked on my new journey with a group of twenty students, noting:

> September 19, 1994: These kids do not know what to say when I ask them to reflect on their baseline essays. We generated a list of questions: hard/easy? feelings? happy/sad with result? did I do well? Interesting, Everett said,

"How do I know if I did well? You didn't grade them." That opened up a whole new dialogue about the need for them to grade their own work and to self-reflect about their writing. I asked them to get to the least common denominators of their writing—the specifics. Before they reflected on their baseline essays, we read Jennifer's journal entry and asked each other how Jennifer could expand it.

It was clear at the start that my heterogeneous class needed substantial support. Carolyn and I labored that first quarter, helping kids come to grips with all of the new demands that we were placing on them. Getting students to revise and rethink their work was an extraordinary task. Never before had they been asked to think about their writing. My students would take the Regents examination in the spring, and since I was applying for a variance, their portfolios would become part of that instrument. We were playing for high stakes!

Teaching students who had never before been asked to respond to a piece of literature—save through the questions at the end of a story—also turned out to be an enormous task. To wean the students from the standard questions, I offered them the option of answering the questions or writing responses. I showed them exemplars, modeled my own responses for them, and discussed the rubric for the reading response. I was then shocked when only three students out of twenty wrote responses to the Bradstreet poem under discussion. Seventeen chose to answer the standard questions that appeared after the selection. I stopped the class and asked my students to explain. They replied, "It's easier to do questions because you really don't have to think; you just have to write it down. After you read, you have to reflect; then, you have to write. That's difficult." For these students, untutored in reflection and analysis, response writing was much more difficult than answering questions. The following month I noted,

October 1994: Well, I returned the essays to the heterogeneous class today. We read an exemplary essay, and then I passed out their papers. I nearly passed out when I saw that they seemed unwilling to think. No one has asked these kids to reflect upon past efforts in hope of infusing the future with improved performances. It was like pulling teeth—without an anesthetic! Do these kids understand my intensity? This portfolio project is burning a hole in my heart! I so want the kids to understand, to take to this job of revision with accuracy and care and diligence. Am I reaching them? We'll see. I'll put on the board the following:

Revision Plan: What will I do to revise? How will I go about it?
My feelings now that the essay is graded . . .
One thing I want Ms Grusko to know . . .

In November, I asked the students to write assessments of their progress in English. They were beginning to understand what we were asking them to do, and they were striving to achieve to our expectations. One non-native student wrote:

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The essay that I am most proud of is the one about hypocrisy because I improved big time. Now, when I hand in my essays, I know I am going to get a good grade, maybe not an A, but a good grade. I hope that by the end of the year, my writing is the best that I can come up with. . . . I guess I am always afraid of papers and essays, because I still think of myself as the girl who couldn't speak English. When I had just arrived, and I was assigned papers to do, I was terrified because I didn't know how to write them. I would hand them in; I thought they were right, and I would get bad grades. I felt so frustrated and mad at myself because I didn't understand much. I still carry that fear with me, even though I can now speak the language and can understand things better. I hope that one day this fear will be replaced by confidence.

As Carolyn and I read the assessment essays, we realized that our students were coming to terms with the work that we expected of them and that our initial apprehensions about our students were unfounded. The grades that first quarter in the heterogeneous class were six A's, six B's, and seven C's; the fact that there were no D's or F's was a sure sign that the portfolio project, and its emphasis on reflection and processing, was having an enormous impact upon my students. The grade distribution in my homogeneous Regents class was also very gratifying: 9 A's, 7 B's, 2 C's, 1 D, and 1 F. In my Honors class, the distribution was as follows: 11 A's and 7 B's. Never before had the students in all my classes been so successful.

Analytical Thinkers Are Not Born; They Are Created

When I asked all of my classes to reflect upon their midyear achievements, students from the top levels to the bottom ranks exclaimed over their newfound ability to communicate. Here are the voices of three students who represent my honors, Regents, and heterogeneous classes respectively:

[Student #1:] My thinking is now on a higher level than it ever has been in my writing. . . . Jose Ortega y Gassett once said "Living is a constant process of deciding what we are going to do." As I have discovered this year, so is writing. It is a constant process. Never before have I been given the chance to revise my essays or other works. But this year, there is no "Final Draft". Nothing is final in writing. This has helped me greatly in my work, because I can always make it better, and see what I did wrong the first time . . .

For me, the big chore is always the same—how to begin a sentence, how to continue it, how to complete it" (Claude Simon). This is the way I felt about writing, coming into the year, but I have developed great confidence. At the beginning of the year, I felt overwhelmed at the pace and work involved with an English honors class. I felt scared, in class, and in my work. But that has changed . . . I now am not afraid to write what I think is correct, even if it is wrong. A lot of my confidence comes from knowing that there is no such thing as the perfect essay. If I am wrong, I can always revise

it and make it better. A wrong interpretation of a text could be correct, since in English everyone has her/his own opinion, critics, teachers, and students. . . . My writing is mine, and I express my opinions and thoughts on my work, not someone else's interpretation of something . . . with my confidence has come enthusiasm for English, which I never had before.

[Student #2:] "One of the pleasantest things in this world is going on a journey" (William Hazlitt). My journey began with complete despair over my papers. It has been long and difficult with many bumps and pitfalls along the way, but I am slowly making my way toward my destination . . .

In the beginning of the year, my writing was terrible. My papers lacked structure; I had no organization, and I didn't know how to develop an idea. At first, my responses were trite, but I wrote often enough which made writing easier for me, and I soon came to understand my mistakes. I learned to organize my ideas and to state them clearly. Analyzing works was another high hurdle that I had to overcome. I have learned to look beyond the words for other meanings and the author's intent. Overcoming these difficulties has brought me a step farther in my journey to better writing.

I have written many papers and responses since that first day in September, and now writing comes to me more naturally. My responses have a sturdy base and are well supported. They are organized and have a specific message. I know how to express my thoughts in a readable, more organized fashion. I achieved this by learning the elements of writing. . . . Incorporating these rules into my essays is now second nature. Overall, my writing is much better; however there is still room for improvement.

[Student #3:]"One must never lose time in vainly regretting the past nor in complaining about changes which cause us discomfort, for improving is the very essence of life" (Anonymous).

In the past, I didn't like reading at all, and every once in a while, when I did read, I would just read and not bother to go over it, therefore, not understanding it. Now, when I am assigned to read something, I am also assigned to write a response. This makes me go back over the reading and write about what I think about it. This has helped my reading a lot, but what has also helped is going over the reading in class. In class, when we work in cooperative groups, I get to discuss the reading with my classmates. We help each other out by talking about the problems we may have had with the reading. At this point, reading is a lot easier and maybe a little enjoyable.

With every essay I write, my writing improves and I learn something different to improve upon for my next essay. In the past, I would write with many mechanical and grammatical mistakes, and I also had a problem with sentence structure. Now that I have written essays and have seen my mistakes, I know what to improve. In my essays now, I can fix my mechanical and grammatical mistakes. My sentence structure has also improved a lot.

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All of the students who were involved in the very real portfolio culture in my classes began to recognize that learning was a journey, that there would be mistakes, and that it was all right for them to make such mistakes. This knowledge was helping them grow. Their realization that writing was a never-ending process and that revisions and self-analysis were part of that process was also helping them to achieve at high levels. Their growing sense of responsibility for and ownership of their own learning was clearly creating thinking individuals.

As Giselle stated at one of our sessions, "Reflection can be about products, processes, performances, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is best when it is specific, detailed, directed toward an audience who is valued, and purposeful. It requires modeling through rubrics, exemplars, honest feedback, and practice." By the end of the first two years, I had learned that analytical thinkers are not born; they are created.

Coming to Terms with "Less Is More"

The statement "Less is more" is an answer to a question with which I grappled for two years. By February of 1994, I had written the question down: How do I deal with the fact that students are writing fewer new essays, but they are writing revision after revision? I wasn't comfortable with the fact that my curriculum was not being covered as it had been in previous years. In the margin notes I asked myself, Does it matter? Although I was slowly coming to terms with the fact that writing revisions is more efficacious than simply creating new writings, I was still reluctant to give up the old ways. Indeed, in June of 1994, I had not fully done so. In my teaching portfolio, a portion of my letter to the reader notes:

> Quite frankly, my teaching has changed. For the better, I don't know. I have been concentrating on more and more writing activities, and I have been doing fewer novels and stories and poems. Is less more? I really don't know; I do know that time constraints certainly predispose us to validate the "less is more" philosophy. It is virtually impossible, if not actually impossible, to teach all the literature I did and do the kind of writing I want to do with the students. Something has to give. I do feel sad; this year, we did not have a chance to do Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. That was a loss, I do believe.

Another entry, written that summer, reads:

> I believe that I need to come to terms with authentic assessments; my thinking is coming closer to understanding why authenticity is necessary. The excitement of my students as they write their process statements is undeniable! Now that I think of this, their process statements are authentic assessments! I never really understood this until now! They have a stake in those state-

ments—and in fact, those midterm assessment essays, which they all wrote with such enthusiasm, are authentic. Case in point: I always administer a test for *The Red Badge of Courage*. This year, I did just that, even though I had asked them to write a series of letters from Henry to his mother, detailing the various points of his journey to self-discovery. The results on the test were abysmal! The results on the essay/letters were wonderful! On the letters, the kids reacted with excitement and understanding; the test's results were appalling! What do I make of this? I think that even the lower-level kids can produce high-quality work when given time to reflect, rethink, retool, etc. That is the benefit of this year for me and for my students!

By the close of the next year, I was clearly understanding the correlation between reflective practice and effective learning, teaching, and assessment. However, I continued to experience my unable-to-be-stilled discomfort with the fact that my students were not reading the same amount of material we had always covered before. My struggle with this issue is noted in my journal:

April 26, 1995: A Real Concern: Yesterday, when I began planning for the end of the year, I realized that this new emphasis on process writing has totally changed what I teach and how I teach! There are only 30 more teaching days left in the year, and we haven't read *The Glass Menagerie*. We haven't done the modern short story unit or the modern poetry unit or *Of Mice and Men*. I will be able to do the latter, but what about the short stories and the poetry?

July 5, 1995: I have found that there is no longer the time to do it all. Reflection and process writing has infiltrated my thinking, and hence, my students' work. I have found that "Less is more." However, I must admit that I am not totally comfortable with this concept, and I am still searching for ways to have my students read more. One thing that I have decided to do for next year, which may address this problem, is to try the thematic approach to American literature. This way, I will not be hemmed in by the time line of American letters, and I will perhaps be able to choose the novel, plays, stories by their worth, rather than by their place in history. Stay tuned.

And finally:

August 8, 1995: I have come to terms with my ambivalence. In terms of the curriculum: sadly, I have had to give up several units. I know that the Coalition of Essential Schools has as its motto, "Less is more," and although this has been met by the scornful comments of some of my colleagues, I find that it has validity. Of what use is it to read novel after novel, story after story without real reflection and thought? Why is it important that students know identities of characters and descriptions of symbols in any given piece of literature? Isn't it more important to ask students to reflect on their reading to establish a basis for their becoming lifelong readers? When was the last time an adult picked up a mystery novel and after reading it, had a test on the characters, metaphors, and similes? Yes, these literary terms are important,

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and they should be taught, but not in the context of 8 novels, 11 stories, 22 poems, 6 plays, and 1 biography or autobiography. And yes, I am sad about giving up some of the literature that I have always taught, but how effective was my teaching over the last few years? How many students read the Cliff's Notes, how many students merely read the last paragraphs of the stories, how many students just answered the questions at the end of the piece by looking over the story, how much of what I taught was really retained, how much of what I taught was really necessary for these young minds? Questions, questions, questions. Therefore, this coming year, I will be organizing—I hope, if I have time—the units in my American literature course in a thematic manner. In this way, I hope that I will be able to touch upon—albeit briefly— some of the aspects of the curriculum that I have had to give up: the Frost poem that I love, the Welty story that has an important message, etc., etc.

So here is the answer to the question: Are my students getting what they need to get in terms of the curriculum? Absolutely, they are getting what they need to become lifelong learners and lifelong readers. I truly believe that the emphasis on reflection and revision, along with the construct that less is more, has changed my students' learning and my teaching for the better.

Right before school began for the 1995–96 year, I constructed a thematic approach to my American literature course with five thematic constructs:

Searching for Self, Issues of Innocence and Growth

Facing the Barriers, Issues of Courage and Resilience

Coping with Relationships, Issues of Love and Loss

Living with Society, Issues of Good and Evil

Broadening the Imagination, Issues of Nature and Art

During each unit, students wrote one memoir, one literary essay, and one poem. In addition, students committed to writing an author project for the entire year, then writing a biographical piece, delivering a research paper, and giving an oral presentation to the class. I decided to try the thematic approach with only one of my American literature classes, and it worked well. I have since expanded my use of the thematic approach to my other classes.

The Habit of Reflection

The process by which my classes became immersed in a portfolio culture was critically important. The fact that my students knew—from day one—the outcomes and indicators to which they would be working was vital. My students delighted in the fact that I was learning with them, that I didn't hold all the answers, and that I could be flexible. Together we learned that self-analysis and reflection leads to the creation of thinking individuals.

I am not the same teacher I was when I first joined the project. Now, in any class, after any lesson, I automatically ask my students to process the day

with me. I ask them questions like: What was important for you today? What wasn't as important? How can we improve upon what we learned and how we learned? What do we know about this that we didn't know yesterday? These questions are always forming in my mind, and this has truly changed who I am as an educator. My students, too, have seen the value of the habit of reflection. Their words attest to the power:

> One of the long term effects of processing is that now I always criticize my work without even thinking twice about it. I never hand anything in without looking it over or rewriting it. Not only did the portfolio project teach me about my writing, it has taught me about myself. . . . I think the portfolio project has given me more confidence in myself and my writing. The rubrics, reader responses, and revisions helped me to improve, and I am now finally impressed with my writing. I think the most important thing I learned is that there is always room for improvement. (Bonnie Hallerman, 12th grader, White Plains High School)

> Writing responses has been essential to me. A great moment for me was when I realized that responses were not just to say, "In this chapter, Hester Prynne goes . . ." but were to draw parallels to other books, find your own connections to a character or event, etc. For example, if you just sit down and read *Moby Dick* loosely, you may find it a bore, but if you respond to it, you will be able to make connections and actually find great comfort in the text. Writing responses really gave me a deeper appreciation of and a love of literature . . . I have seen how interesting and satisfying sticking with something and constantly working on it and improving it may be . . . I have gained more confidence in myself as a reader, writer, and thinker as a result of the portfolio project. . . . I have learned that it is good to take risks in my writing, and never to be afraid to explore a new idea, even if it is something I think I may not be "right" about. (Lauren Ambrose, 11th grader, White Plains High School)

> Processing my work has been a one-year experience which yielded results that will last a lifetime. It forced me to look at the necessary components of an essay and assess whether or not my essay contained these points. Having the chance to respond to any aspect of a piece of literature was a unique opportunity. I have become a more aware reader. Although I don't always write down my observations, reader responses trained me to glance deeper into a story, while reading it on my own. I still do this; even if looking deeper into a story doesn't help me in a class, it makes me feel personally successful. In general, revisions have given me the ability to improve, to write, and make the most of my talent as a writer . . . I have learned to question, think, answer, rethink, and do again. This can be applied to more than literature and five paragraph essays. It sounds funny, but it is a life philosophy.
> (Andrea Greenblatt-Harrison, 11th grader, White Plains High School)

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