

## Reflection Paper

**Subject:** Literacy/Writing

**Grade:** Two

**Module 2: Planning for Active Learning :** Teacher implements instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by:

**Selected Indicator:** Including strategies for teaching and supporting content area literacy skills, and when appropriate, numeracy skills (across the curriculum). L- Literacy N- Numeracy

### Goal:

I will learn how to use strategies and materials that focus on the process and structure of writing for my second grade students. I will plan lessons that will help my students become strong writers and that will help them understand the writing process. I will also plan on embedding state standards in my writing units. As a result, my students will be strong, independent, rigorous writers.

### Initial Summary:

As I began to think about my second grade students as writers and indicator 5 in Module 2, I wondered how I was going to plan these writing lessons in which my students become writers who can work productively with independence and rigor. I realize that in order for these lessons to meet these goals; I need to utilize the knowledge of the Writers' Workshop Model from my literacy coach and through reading about this model in texts by Lucy Calkins. I want to make sure that I incorporate what I learn from these readings and discussions with my colleague into my writing units. In addition to using these strategies, I also want to make sure that the Common Core State Standards in second grade writing are embedded in my lessons. Lastly, I want to make sure that these writing lessons meet the needs of all of my students, that they are differentiated, and that they address what skills they need to grow as independent, rigorous writers.

### Reflection:

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In the past, when I planned my writing lessons I tried to follow the writers workshop model but found I did not have enough knowledge or the understanding to plan these lessons from start to finish with a clear scope and sequence that allowed my students to grow as independent, rigorous writers. This year I plan on my writing workshop to look much different in my classroom. I plan to have my students complete more units in writing, for them to have a better understanding of the writing process, and to produce more finished pieces in each area of

writing. Not only do I plan on them becoming stronger writers but I plan on becoming a stronger writing teacher too.

Before the actual writing can begin and before I can help my students become writers, I have to create an environment that allows them to do this. Building strong writers require that I plan an environment in which my students can write, learn strategies to become rigorous writers, and understand the writing process. I need to think about what this environment looks like and how can I achieve this. I can accomplish creating this writing environment by talking with my literacy coach and reading about environment from Lucy Calkins. The chapter on "Provisioning a Writers Workshop" really gave me a great insight in what writers workshop should look like and what I need to do in order to create the right writing environment.

After reading this chapter, I have learned the importance of having a specific area in my classroom where my students can meet to learn writing strategies, share ideas, and keep materials. I also learned that I need to plan signals that I will use that will indicate to my students that writers workshop has begun and a signal that talking has stopped and writing has started. In the past I have used "Stop, Look, and Listen" as a signal that I need my students to stop and listen for instruction. Since this has worked well in the past, I am planning on using this as an indicator for my students that writers workshop is beginning and to come to the designated meeting area. I plan on using our morning meeting space as the spot on which we will have our mini-writing lessons. The students are familiar with this area and know the expectations, so I think that this will work well for our writing meetings. Although, I will have to establish new guidelines and expectations for writers workshop before we can begin meeting. I plan on having my students help create some of these guidelines and expectations. I anticipate that by having my students create these rules that they will have more ownership and become more invested in the writers workshop process.

Once my writing environment is established, I will have to plan what materials my students will be using. My classroom consists of 24 students and some of these students have 504s and IEPs which is important to consider when planning what materials would help them be more successful. I plan on having each of my students have their own writing folder and I anticipate that this will help them stay organized with their writing. To help them with this organization, I plan on having them place a red dot on one pocket to indicate finished pieces and a green dot on the other pocket to show that these are pieces they are still working on. I predict that having these colored coded pockets will impact those students of mine who struggle with organization and staying on task. In addition, I predict that this colored coded system will allow them to become more independent and require less teacher support. I anticipate that by the end of the narrative writing unit that these students in particular, will not have to spend lots of time

searching for material but will be able to focus more of their time writing. Overall, having the folder set up this way will allow my students to be better organized and will affect their daily writing because they won't have to search for pieces that they are working on. This strategy will aid them to begin writing right away.

I also learned the importance of having my students date their daily writing. Dated work will let my students see how they are growing as writers and will help them see how long it takes them to complete a writing piece from start to finish. In addition, the dating of their work will help me establish a writing portfolio that I can use for parent conferences and as data collection. I plan on modeling this new procedure during a mini-lesson and have this be continually modeled when I am presenting my own writing examples. I also plan on reinforcing this "dating" daily when I am conferencing with students. I anticipate that my students will form this habit of dating their work if I provide examples of it in my own work and by providing tools to make this more fun. Currently my students enjoy using stamps during language arts work stations, so I expect that they will also enjoy using a stamp as a tool to use in their writing too. Therefore, I plan on carrying over this enjoyment by providing a date stamp and stamp pads in various fun, bright colors for them to use to date their writing.

Another material that I need to consider is what medium my students will be writing with. In the past I have always used pencils but Calkins suggests using markers and pens. I am intending for my students to write in pen. I anticipate that since we don't use pens in our daily work, that using this medium will help make writing more exciting for my class. I plan on demonstrating on how to use a pen in our writing during a mini-lesson because a pen doesn't have an eraser like a pencil and I predict that some of my students will have some difficulty adjusting to this new medium. My students will need to learn what to do when they make a mistake and then they will have to practice applying this new technique of "erasing." I have two students who like to have neat and perfect writing, so I anticipate that this will be very difficult for them and may cause some anxiety. I don't want that to impact their writing, so I plan on offering them the use of a pencil, if they are struggling writing with a pen. I also anticipate that by using a pen, my students will spend less time erasing and fixing mistakes. This will allow them to do more writing and help them with their editing and revising process.

I have learned that not only do my students need to be organized and have the right tools to be successful writers, but I need these as well. In order for me to reach that goal of becoming a stronger writing teacher, I need to be better prepared at presenting my lessons. To succeed at this, I plan on creating a writing binder which will have plans on each unit, anchor charts, graphic organizers, my writing examples, and strategies to implement specific writing genres. I believe that this binder will help me be better prepared in presenting lessons and in my

planning of upcoming units. It will also be a great tool for me to use each year because I will be able to look back at what lessons worked well and what lessons need to be improved upon. It can also be a tool that I can use to share with my colleagues, I can add ideas and lessons that worked well for them and share lessons that were successful for me.

Before I can properly plan my writing units and set up my writing binder, I will need to assign a writing prompt to give to my students. How my students do on this pre-assessment will dictate how my lessons will be shaped. Knowing what their strengths and weaknesses are in writing, gives me the foundation in which to base my lessons on. I plan on creating my own lesson plans based on Calkins' writing units and then I will modify these lessons to meet the needs of all my students using data collected from this pre-assessment.

Currently my students lack an understanding on how to bring a character to life using details and talk. The majority of my 24 students (19 out of 24) fall in the Grade 1 Level of development for elaboration using the Calkins rubric for second grade narrative writing. They also have no knowledge on how to use quotation marks to indicate what a character is saying. This is a skill in writing that my second graders are expected to include in their writing. All of my students scored in the Grade 1 Level for language conventions in this particular area on the rubric. Using this information gathered from the rubrics, I will need to plan lessons that are specifically designed to meet the areas in which my students are insufficient. I anticipate that these lessons will impact my student's knowledge of how to use quotation marks and elaboration in their writing and I will see the application of this skill at the end of this unit. I predict that as my students become aware of how quotation marks help indicate what characters say, that they will include them in their daily writing. I expect that the next time assessing, I will find more students will move to Grade 2 Level on the post assessment as indicated by the rubric.

I also plan on utilizing my literacy coach, by having him teach me how to score these assessments using the Calkins' rubric. From there, I plan on having him help me re-write/modify lessons to meet the needs of my students. I also intend for him to come into my classroom to model what writers workshop looks like. I can learn techniques and strategies from him that I can later use when teaching writing to my students. I foresee that my students will enjoy having another teacher share writing strategies with them and that their future writing will benefit by having seen two different teaching styles. I expect that they will be able to apply these different approaches to their daily writing. These new skills can be added to their bag of "tools," that I anticipate they will refer back to while they are writing.

I believe that all of these strategies that I have learned will add to my daily teaching and planning and will help me become a stronger writing teacher. This preparation of a writing environment, better thought out lessons, and the understanding of what my students need will impact their daily writing and help them become stronger, independent, rigorous writers. I plan on having a classroom filled with students that are more organized, are more excited to write, and apply skills learned during daily lessons. I expect that by having all these strategies in place, it will help them become students who grow as better writers each and every day.