

Port Angeles School District
Language Arts Curriculum Committee 2006-09 Report
District-Wide Language Arts Program Recommendations for 2009-10
July 13, 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port Angeles School District Language Arts Curriculum Committee was convened again in the winter of 2008. This group met during the 2008-09 school year, and will continue to meet at least for the 2009-10 school year.

The context for the work this group must accomplish is rapidly changing. The state and national expectations for language arts instruction and its requisite student achievement levels continue to increase. World-wide, United States students continue to under perform in comparison to their counterparts in many other countries. This is particularly true in the higher grades.

While the district has made strong gains in literacy over the last several years, writing continues to be a content area that provides challenges. The implementation of a writing curriculum K-5 two years ago has led to an improvement of elementary students' writing skills, particularly as measured by the grade 4 WASL writing assessment. The WASL writing scores have remained high and sustained at the secondary level. The elementary level has now utilized a coherent writing curriculum for two years and stronger writing scores are anticipated. The underlying challenge is to meet the writing instructional demands, while not losing student achievement gains in reading.

Each district curriculum committee must respond to the essential question with regard to curriculum adoption: "Whose interests are being served?" The expectation is that all stakeholders in the system will have their interests served to the degree we can reasonably do so. The intended, enacted and assessed curriculum must be aligned. This committee is working to that end for the K-12 system, and has already taken the first steps. Grade level teams reviewed writing instructional calendars in May 2009, realizing the need to have a footprint for those teachers new to the district and/or new to a grade level within the district. The literacy calendars further engender coherence across the district and equity of experience for all stakeholders in the district. As an additional support this year, a monthly writing 'looking ahead' was developed and distributed to each teacher during the course of the year. These have proved to be a valuable resource for the teachers moving to new grade levels this year.

The recommendations of this district curriculum committee inform practice at all grade levels of the district. Due to the transitions of grade levels and schools, the sixth grade reading and writing curriculum warranted significant scrutiny. The writing curriculum at the sixth grade requires a more coherent approach as the sixth grade sections are now situated in five elementary schools rather than in two middle schools. Two years ago, the committee recommended the *Step Up To Writing* curriculum materials integrated with the *Ralph Fletcher* writing materials previously adopted for the intermediate elementary grade classrooms. Sixth grade teachers have already received professional development on these curriculum topics and materials with the assistance of the writing curriculum adoption specialists.

The committee recommends continuing this plan for writing in the coming year. Also, the spelling curriculum for sixth grade was a focus at the May grade level team meeting. The sixth grade is expected to continue the Sitton spelling curriculum that is in place in grades one through five. With regard to reading at the sixth grade, the committee recommends continuing the Houghton-Mifflin sixth grade text as the anthology for literature and reading instruction.

For the middle school level, the committee recommends the continued use of the *Step Up To Writing* materials and various writer's workshop strategies and resources. At the high school level, the review and refinement focus on the integration of writer's workshop at the freshman and sophomore levels. Literature circles will also be a study item for the high school language arts teachers. Mentor text professional development was provided during the past academic year as a resource for writing strategies. Rubrics and instructional calendars for the secondary level were reviewed and refined.

A significant benefit is the more explicit and/or transparent are our expectations, or the indicators of success within the classroom, the more our parents and community members are able to partner with us. We know we have great parents and our community strongly supports teaching and learning, so additional efforts to communicate more clearly the targets for students in our district means parents will be to support initiatives enabling students to reach rising standards.

Appendices to this report are:

- Appendix A, Results of Reflective Work of Language Arts Committee
- Appendix B, Two Sample Writing Rubrics
- Appendix C, Current Reading and Writing Benchmark Assessment Map
- Appendix D, Summer Reading Lists
- Appendix E, Looking Ahead, February Writing in Fourth Grade
- Appendix F, Looking Ahead, October Writing in Second Grade

LANGUAGE ARTS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The staff members listed below comprise the Language Arts Curriculum Committee for the current 2008-09 school year. These members represent every school in the district, the kindergarten program, and the special education department. Classroom teachers, support teachers, and administrators began their work this spring.

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brook Anderson | 10. Bryan O'Donnell |
| 2. Sandi Biasell | 11. Mary O'Kief |
| 3. Laurie Day | 12. Michelle Olsen |
| 4. Jon Eekhoff | 13. Michael Poindexter |
| 5. Donette Hope | 14. Michelle Reid |
| 6. Keith Johnson | 15. Katie Ross |
| 7. Jeff Lunt | 16. Stacey Sanders |
| 8. Melissa McBride | 17. Teresa Thorson |
| 9. Gary McLaughlin | |

BACKGROUND

The background for addressing a district-wide literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment, lies in a state and national context as much as the local district literacy curriculum climate. As our nation and state have experienced higher levels of accountability for student achievement outcomes, districts everywhere have been challenged to have clearer and more focused curriculum. As districts struggle to develop and implement internal curricular targets that match external accountability structures, there are clear pressures on the system. Limited time, fiscal resources, technology, information-sharing structures, availability of quality assessments, shared assessment understanding and expertise and clear curricular targets all impose significant pressure on systems already under stress.

In the last few years, the Port Angeles School District focused much of its energy and resources on a literacy initiative. While this has led to great gains, particularly in the area of reading, there are still gains to be realized in writing achievement. Writing is clearly an area which must have a focused and coherent systemic approach. Moving into year three of the new writing curriculum requires continuing to provide job-embedded support in the form of professional development for teachers. To date, this work has been shouldered primarily by the curriculum adoption specialists. This has helped more effectively integrate these materials into their classroom practice.

In response to this particular need, the district Language Arts Curriculum Committee was commissioned several years ago to continue prior work to develop and implement a coherent district-wide Language Arts curriculum. The committee continued work this year with a renewed focus on data and its relative strengths and opportunities.

The need to have reading and writing instructional plans in place while the committee plans a new aligned reading and writing curriculum continues to be a challenge. With the new state test maps for reading, math and science, the internal assessments will also need some adjustment. This will be a continued focus for the upcoming year. It is tantamount to remodeling the plane as we fly it. The support struggling student writers will continue to need must be balanced with the support resources available to assist struggling student mathematicians. As science and math are both NCLB and graduation requirements, they continue to demand resources from an already scarce pool.

PARAMETERS

The Language Arts Curriculum Committee understands it is working within a time that budget and fiscal considerations cast an increasing pall on the purchase of new materials. The committee is sensitive to these constraints. Given these constraints, and the current rather fluid nature of the K-12 literacy curriculum, the committee is charged with identifying an aligned curriculum and professional development support for the use of these materials.

The following responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Review the 2004 Language Arts Committee Report and identify curriculum recommendations and implementation commitments.
- Identify where reading and writing topics are being taught in the K-12 curriculum.
- Determine recommendations for curriculum and grade level placement for identified language arts curriculum topics.
- Determine best method to communicate language arts curriculum expectations internally.
- Review available curriculum materials for merit, particularly novels used at the secondary level, and determine impact adjustments on the budget and staffing projections with student enrollment patterns continuing to decline.
- Clarify and communicate pacing guide expectations across the district.
- Review supplemental materials to support language arts curriculum interventions, both remedial and enrichment, and recommend necessary revisions.
- Collect input on and communicate professional development needs for language arts instruction.
- Review and recommend grade level assessments aligned with state standards and Grade Level Expectations as well as the newly revised state reading test maps.

The committee was charged to work diligently on these varied responsibilities and make its recommendations during the course of the 2008-09 academic year. The committee will continue its work as the new recommendations are implemented over the next several years in order that there is a high level of support for the new expectations outlined later in this report and other updates coming in the approaching academic year.

Finally, the expectation exists that as a curriculum committee, there are three major tenets necessary to frame our work at the district level. These are: 1) we live and work in a standards-based environment; 2) there must be equity across the system for students and staff; and 3) coherence is necessary throughout a student's experience in the Port Angeles School District.

PROCESS

As the committee convened again this past winter, teachers and principals came together to continue the language arts curriculum review process. As our first order of business, we felt it important to wrestle with the issues and concerns staff members were currently having with regard to the reading and writing curriculum.

Utilizing a group process, the committee was able to generate a number of topics requiring resolution to successfully meet our reading and writing instructional challenges. The committee members remain energetic, committed and optimistic.

Early in its meeting schedule the committee did some reflective work about what works and what remains as a challenge in reading and writing instruction. Appendix A shows the results of these reflections.

The Language Arts Curriculum Committee was scheduled to meet twice monthly during the second semester of the 2008-09 academic year. They met from 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m., approximately every other Tuesday, for the duration of the academic year. The committee made recommendations to the Instructional Materials Committee at their June 16th meeting. Further, the committee will continue to provide oversight to the district literacy programs approved.

LANGUAGE ARTS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee concluded that there continue to be real strengths with the current literacy initiatives in the district, even while there are still significant challenges in writing at the elementary level. While there was general consensus on the effectiveness of the current reading curriculum, it is clear that it is not as coherent as it could be. More discussion will likely occur as to the relative merits of basal reader use, particularly at grades K-6.

Since there is a significant transition within the elementary program as the Response to Intervention program is implemented at the elementary level in the upcoming year, the reading program especially will be scrutinized. The fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum is a conversation that continues to be necessary if the district is to maintain coherence and equity across schools in this content area.

A strong resource for teachers this past year has been the development and distribution of monthly 'looking ahead' memos regarding the writing curriculum. See Appendix E for a sample document. These went out each month at each elementary grade level. These advance organizers enabled clear targets and real time instructional strategy suggestions for teachers.

Elementary Level

For the elementary level, the district committee continues to support the Houghton-Mifflin reading series and continues to review the fidelity of use of this text across the district. With regard to the writing curriculum at the elementary level, the committee continues to support several recommendations. For grade K-2, the committee supports continued use of the *Lucy Calkins Writing Materials*. These materials continue to be used in primary level classrooms across the district. It appears that these materials are yielding higher quality student writing than previously used materials and strategies as noted by writing samples.

Further, at the elementary level, teachers continue to refine the instructional calendars based on their experience with the instructional materials. An integral aspect of these recommendations is that each grade level builds on the strategies mastered at the grade level preceding it. As each year unfolds, the increasing refinement of the calendars will be a necessity, particularly with the new test maps coming from the state. This committee supports continued use of the third grade *Lucy Calkins Writing Materials* for the writing curriculum at grade three. Further, the members support continued use of the *Ralph Fletcher Writing Materials* for grades four and five, with the *Lucy Calkins Writing Materials* as support materials for grade four. A building set of these support materials has been made available by the district and housed in each elementary building professional library.

The *Step Up to Writing* curriculum materials were made available to the fifth grade teachers who have trained in the use of these materials. Sixth grade blends the *Step Up to Writing* materials with the Ralph Fletcher materials to form a writing curriculum. Professional development for the sixth grade team continued at its May grade level team meeting. The writing adoption specialists reviewed the writing materials, as well as the writing curriculum coherence and expectations with the sixth grade teachers throughout the year. End of year writing assessments were completed and collected to move forward to the seventh grade teachers in the fall.

Middle School Level

At the middle level, there has been continued discussion this year with regard to the continued use of a coherent writing curriculum. The continuation of the writing workshop model is important in the development and maintenance of a coherent writing curriculum. The Nancy Atwell text, *Lessons That Change Writers*, continues to be used as a teacher resource for seventh and eighth grade teachers as they implement a coherent writing curriculum at the middle school level. Literacy calendars have been reviewed and revised for the upcoming year.

Spelling Curriculum K-8

Another aspect of a comprehensive district writing curriculum is the agreement on a consistent and aligned spelling program. This enables teachers, students and parents to have clear spelling targets for each grade level. Core and priority words have been outlined and instructional time committed to achieving the effective use of these words. The transparent and explicit nature of this spelling program then enables parents to more effectively partner with the district staff to improve spelling specifically and writing in general.

Another community wide spelling bee centered on fourth graders was successfully completed in May. Many thanks are due to the Soroptimists International of Port Angeles-Jet Set Club for generously donating funds to assist in the purchase of the spelling program materials and their continued support for the spelling bee.

The committee reviewed the use of the Rebecca Sitton spelling program for K-8. Teachers report that there is not enough time to get through the wealth of materials that comes with the program. While the program does have flexibility for remediation, the enrichment possibilities in the program for highly capable students are not as robust. Teachers were surveyed this past year on their use of the current spelling program. Beyond using the five featured words, there is not much in common in how teachers use this program. This is a topic that will require further discussion and focus in the coming year. The sixth grade did spend time at the spring grade level team meeting, reviewing the expected use of the spelling program in this important transition year.

Cursive Handwriting Grade 3

Another area the Language Arts Committee took up two years ago was the topic of cursive handwriting. Until that year, the district had been silent on the expectation for teaching the basic tenets of cursive writing. Handwriting is a grade level expectation in the state of Washington, and therefore, the district cannot remain silent on this topic.

At grade level team meetings in the spring of 2006, Team Third Grade stepped up to say they would take on the instruction connected to cursive writing. Mrs. Shirley Rutz and Mrs. Claire Turner agreed to research the cursive handwriting materials available and return to the committee with a recommendation on behalf of Team Third Grade. They did so, and the committee accepted their recommendation two years ago for the utilization of *Pearson Scott Foresman D'Nealian® Handwriting* materials.

These materials were implemented and believe to be yielding positive results for the third grade writers. This program was revisited this spring again at grade level team meetings, as professional development to support these materials will continue to be a need for new teachers and/or teachers new to the third grade level. The topic was also discussed at spring grade level team meetings for the intermediate grades this past spring. Expectations for the use of cursive writing at grades four and five will need to be revisited in the coming year.

Finally, the district Language Arts Curriculum Committee recognizes the necessity of supportive professional development for any new curriculum materials including the addition of novels to be effectively integrated into classroom practice. As the efficacy of each individual classroom teacher is enhanced, a stronger and more coherent teaching and learning plan will be realized for all students in the district. The committee notes the importance of building on the strengths of those already within the district as the capacity of the system continues to grow.

The more significant the growth of our internal capacity, the more sustainable will be the growth over time. Curriculum adoption specialists have played an integral role in job-embedded professional development plans to support the literacy curriculum. Further, the grade level team meeting structure allows for the sharing of information and expertise across the district among and between experienced classroom teachers in the district.

Writing Instruction

The committee spent considerable time looking at the use of writing rubrics across the district as the best way to focus on improving writing instruction. Rubrics can be the foundation for effective discussion about a student's writing ability between student and teacher, student and parents, and teacher and parents.

Many of the rubrics the committee reviewed showed a clear alignment with state writing standards as measured on the WASL. Teachers experienced with the use of rubrics have to balance the general expectations of students at all levels with the particular expression of those expectations on a specific assignment. A few sample rubrics are included in Appendix B.

The committee approved the following as the district protocol for writing rubrics:

1. Rubrics will clearly explain to students and parents what the teacher's expectations are for the writing assignment.

2. Rubrics will be available to students early enough in the writing process so that rubrics can serve as an instructional guide as well as an evaluation tool.
3. Rubrics will be consistent with Grade Level Expectations in writing.
4. Rubrics are required for all “major” writing assignments—those that take students through the publication stage of the writing process.
5. Students in grades 4 and above should work with writing rubrics at least three times a year. Students in grades K-3 should work with writing checklists appropriate at their grade level. A writing checklist is less formal and less fully developed than a rubric. The writing continuum is such an example of this type of checklist and is developmentally more appropriate.

Assessment Issues

The state is making several changes in the state assessment program. At grades 3-8, the WASL is being replaced by the Measurements of Student Progress. At grade 10, the WASL is being replaced by the High School Proficiency Exam. The state did not provide enough details about how these assessments would be different from the WASL during the time that the committee met. Generally, we know that there are likely to be no changes in the writing assessment.

The reading assessment will be shorter (one day instead of two), feature shorter reading passages, eliminate extended response questions (4-point items), and have fewer short answer questions (2-point) items. The district will need to revise its reading benchmark assessments to reflect these changes, but will have to wait until the fall when more specific information is available. For example, a detailed test map of the new reading assessment was not available to the committee. See Appendix C for what we know now.

The committee also looked at an assessment product from the Northwest Evaluation Association called the Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP. One committee member noted that the Sequim school district has used this and seems pleased with it. Once more detailed information about the new state assessments is available, the committee may want to take a closer look at this product to see if it is workable for our district. It is likely a pilot site in the district will be launched in the coming year.

Summer Reading Lists

The committee looked at the different ways the district could promote reading among students. The discussion led to the idea of creating summer reading lists for different levels of students. Because of time issues, the committee looked at creating such a list as a start for this year and then refining and publicizing next year. The list is attached in Appendix D.

Supplemental Novels

The committee supported the recommendation of the Port Angeles High School English Department to add *The Things They Carried* to the reading list for American Studies and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to the reading list for English 9. These titles were moved forward to the district Instructional Materials Committee for approval at its June 16th meeting.

The committee reviewed the reading lists for the high school and the middle school. For several years there has been an issue with different levels using the same books with students. The committee decided that the lists from each level are “protected” and that it is not appropriate for teachers to use books that established for use at another level.

The committee also took a first look at the issue of “sacrosanct” novels—books teachers felt were too important to consider replacing in order to have a broader range of authors (gender, ethnicity) available to students. More work needs to be done on this topic, including taking the current books used and creating a grid that reflects the diversity among the authors. This will be a focus for continued work in the upcoming year.

Appendix A Results of Reflective Work of Language Arts Committee**What are the strengths of reading...*****...at the elementary level?***

- deeper thinking, below the surface
- coming into the next grade better prepared
- common language in K-6 reading strategies

...at the middle level?

- students who do read, read well
- students like to read and like to talk about it
- can choose books, make a plan, set reading
- reading strategies aren't new, need to be reviewed, but are not a focus

...at the high school level?

- WASL results show basic comprehension, especially in informational texts
- students connect with certain novels—particularly modern texts that use their language
- honors students at least try to engage and will work their way through most novels

What are the challenges inherent in student reading...***...at the elementary level?***

- lack of a consistent curriculum creates gaps (teachers need to create own deeper questions because text questions focus on surface issues)
- continuing to read at home

...at the middle level?

- too many ability levels within a class
- time constraints—how to help the kids who need the most intensive work in 44 minutes
- apathy firm in their minds—don't like to read
- don't like to write about what they read
- updated novels
- don't do reading homework, don't come prepared next day to discuss
- vocabulary

...at the high school level?

- students simply don't do homework—often don't do the reading at all
- unfamiliarity with words, problems with decoding
- no real sense of how punctuation works
- lack of reflection on what they are reading—inability to analyze at deeper levels
- need to break reliance on SparkNotes
- getting boys interested

Appendix A, cont. Results of Reflective Work of Language Arts Committee**What are the strengths of writing...*****...at the elementary level?***

- willingness to write, have ideas
- quantity
- writing across the curriculum
- do well on what is focused on at the time

...at the middle level?

- Step Up to Writing provides a structure
- creativity/ideas
- kids with Step Up instruction come with a schema

...at the high school level

- development of elaboration—we are better than most schools [85.8% meet standard in C/O/S vs. 82.6% in state]
- can handle simple sentence structures pretty well
- generally strong with personal writing

What are the challenges inherent in student writing...***...at the elementary level?***

- conventions
- putting all the pieces together
- continuing to write at home

...at the middle level?

- punctuation, capitalization
- interesting elaboration—can say it orally but won't write it down
- time
- some elementary schools do Step Up to Writing, some don't
- still necessary to start instruction with sentences, and then work up to paragraphs and essays
- general apathy among boys

...at the high school level?

- getting beyond formulaic organization—transitions and paragraphing tend to be at basic level
- struggle with more complex sentences—lots of structural issues (fragments, comma splices, etc.)
- lack distinct style and overall voice
- students dislike more abstract topics
- plagiarism
- research writing is weak

Appendix B, cont.

Two Sample Writing Rubrics

AMERICAN STUDIES

Freedom, Liberty, and the Individual
History In-Class Essay

Name _____

Ideas and Development

40

- ___ you wrote a minimum of 500-600 words (about three pages)
- ___ clear focus on one historical event or issue
- ___ you provided a clear, concise thesis statement
- ___ you presented a clear case explaining the ways in which freedom played a positive role or had positive effects in this event or issue
- ___ you presented a clear case explaining the ways in which freedom played a negative role or had negative effects in this event or issue
- ___ you were specific in your use of details to explain your thoughts
- ___ you were abundant in your details
- ___ you were accurate in your details
- ___ you showed good judgment in your choice of details

Research

10

- ___ you used at least two sources to attain your information (no more than one from your textbook)
- ___ you provided a bibliography, using proper form (type this and have it ready prior to writing the essay)
- ___ you turned in handwritten or highlighted notes for both sources
- ___ you properly cited anything requiring footnotes within the essay, using in-text citations
- ___ you carefully avoided plagiarism

Organization and Conventions

15

- ___ clear introduction, including your thesis (underline your thesis)
- ___ your paragraphing helped your reader follow your argument/analysis
- ___ clear conclusion, distinct from your introduction
- ___ your spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure made your teacher beam with delight
- ___ you wrote your essay neatly in ink

Total (minimum of 45 needed to pass this portion of the unit project)

65

Appendix C Current Reading and Writing Benchmark Assessment Map

Reading and Writing Benchmark Assessment Map

| Grade | Reading Items | Reading 2-point | Reading 4-point | Writing Prompts |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 3 | 11 | 2 | 1 (2 2-point) | narrative expository |
| 4 | 11 | 2 | 1 | narrative expository |
| 5 | 12 | 3 | 1 | expository CBA-based expository |
| 6 | 15 | 4 | 0 | expository persuasive |
| 7 | 13 | 4 | 1 | expository persuasive |
| 8 | no reading benchmark | | | expository persuasive |
| 9 Winter | 21 | 5 | 0 | expository |
| 9 Spring | 21 | 4 | 1 | persuasive |
| 10 | 19 | 4 | 1 (2 2-point) | expository persuasive |

What we currently know about the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) for 2010:

- shorter reading tests—one session only
- no 4-point items
- fewer 2-point items so that multiple-choice questions make up at least 75% of test
- shorter reading passages
- some “completion” items—fill-in-the-blank
- 4th grade writing could be shortened to one prompt with some multiple-choice items
- no changes in 7th grade and 10th grade writing at this time
- more test information, possibly with sample items, could be available in late August or September
- different testing windows for grades 3-8

Appendix D

Summer Reading Lists

Titles and Authors for Primary Students

* *The Boxcar Children* Series by Gertrude Chandler Warner.

* The *Cam Jansen* Series by David Adler.

The Dragon of Doom by Bruce Coville.

The *Geronimo Stilton* Series by Geronimo Stilton.

The *Harry and Mudge* Series by Cynthia Rylant.

The *Horrible Harry* Series by Suzy Kline.

The *Judy Moody* Series by Megan McDonald.

* The *Junie B. Jones* Series by Barbara Park.

The *Magic Tree House* Series by Mary Pope Osborne.

* *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* by Betty MacDonald.

Follow this link to website of the North Olympic Library System for many other reading suggestions, including information about their Summer Reading Program:

www.org/kids-teens/for-kids.html

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

Titles and Authors for Intermediate Students

**The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain is the classic story of a mischievous 19th-century boy in a Mississippi River town and his friends, Huck Finn and Becky Thatcher, as they run away from home, witness a murder, and find treasure in a cave.

The BFG by Roald Dahl is a novel about a BFG (Big Friendly Giant), who spends his life blowing happy dreams to children. Sophie concocts with him a plan to save the world from nine other man-gobbling cannybull giants.

The Big Field by Mike Lupica is a novel about Hutch, a fourteen-year-old baseball player who feels threatened by the arrival of a new teammate named Darryl. Hutch tries to work through his insecurities about both Darryl and his remote and silent father, who was once a great ballplayer too.

* *A Boy at War* by Harry Mazer is a novel about teenaged Adam who, while fishing with his friends off Honolulu on December 7, 1941, is caught in the midst of the Japanese attack and through the chaos of the subsequent days tries to find his father, a naval officer who was serving on the U.S.S. Arizona when the bombs fell.

The *Captain Underpants* Series by Dav Pilkey are comic novels (the eighth one was published in 2006) about George and Harold and their adventures.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney is a novel about Greg, who records his sixth grade experiences in a middle school where he and his best friend, Rowley, undersized weaklings amid boys who need to shave twice daily, hope just to survive. When Rowley grows more popular, Greg must take drastic measures to save their friendship.

How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O'Connor is a novel about Georgina who lives in the family car in their small North Carolina town after their father leaves them virtually penniless. Desperate to improve their situation and unwilling to accept her overworked mother's calls for patience, she persuades her younger brother to help her in an elaborate scheme to get money by stealing a dog and then claiming the reward that the owners are bound to offer.

The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynn Reid Banks is a novel about nine-year-old boy who receives a plastic Indian, a cupboard, and a little key for his birthday and finds himself involved in adventure when the Indian comes to life in the cupboard and befriends him.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell is a novel about a young Indian left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, where she spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life.

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

The Last Place Sports Poems of Jeremy Bloom by Gordon Korman and Bernice Korman is a collection of poems about winning, losing, and being a good sport (sometimes).

The Lemonade War by Jacqueline Davis is a novel about Evan and his younger sister Jesse who react very differently to the news that they will be in the same class for fourth grade and as the end of summer approaches, they battle it out through lemonade stands, each trying to be the first to earn 100 dollars.

The Liberation of Gabriel King by K. L. Going is a novel set in Georgia during the summer of 1976. Gabriel, a white boy who is being bullied, and Frita, an African American girl who is facing prejudice, decide to overcome their many fears together as they enter fifth grade.

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli is a novel that tells the story Jeffrey Lionel Magee, whose life becomes legendary after his parents die, as he accomplishes athletic and other feats which awe his contemporaries.

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt is a fantasy novel about ten-year-old Winnie Foster who stumbles upon the Tuck family's disturbing secret and is forced to come to terms with her conflicting emotions. She feels drawn to the loving, gentle and rather eccentric Tucks, but what they tell her is too incredible to be believed.

These authors have written several books that have proved popular with students.

Gary Paulsen

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Sharon Creech

Louis Sachar

Anna Claybourne (nonfiction)

* C. S. Lewis (Narnia series)

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

Titles for Middle School Students

Double Indemnity by Margaret Haddix is a suspense novel about thirteen-year-old Bethany, whose parents have always been overprotective and suddenly drop out of sight with no explanation, leaving her with an aunt she never knew existed, Bethany uncovers shocking secrets that make her question everything she thought she knew about herself and her family.

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick is a realistic novel about a thirteen-year-old tries to deal with his complicated emotions, his school life, and his desire to support his family when his younger brother is diagnosed with leukemia.

Eragon by Christopher Paolini is a fantasy novel about a boy who believes that he is merely a poor farm boy--until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Other Paolini books that may be of interest include *Eldest* and *Brisingr*.

Flush by Carl Hiaasen is a mystery novel about Noah Underwood and his younger sister Abbey and their attempts to help their father clear himself of charges resulting from sinking a floating casino.

The Giver by Lois Lowry is a novel about a twelve-year-old boy chosen to be his community's Receiver of Memories and the disturbing truth he learns about the "perfect" world he lives in.

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen is a novel about thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness after a plane crash, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

Holes by Louis Sachar is a novel about Stanley Yelnats, a middle school boy sent to a camp for juvenile delinquents in a dry Texas desert where they have to dig holes as a way to pass time.

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen is a novel about a middle school boy with no real friends and no one to share lunch with at school who finds himself caught up in a mystery involving endangered miniature owls.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins is a science fiction novel set in the not-too-distant future where two children each year must compete in a televised fight to the death.

The *Maximum Ride* Series by James Patterson (including *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*, *School's Out—Forever* and *The Final Warning*) is a group of science fiction novels featuring fourteen-year-old Max and her friends as they face adventures with genetically enhanced talents, such as flying.

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

The *Pendragon* (*The Merchant of Death, The Lost City of Faar, The Never War, The Reality Bug, Black Water*) Series by D. J. MacHale features Bobby Pendragon, a seemingly normal and somewhat reluctant 14- year-old boy who is swept into an amazing five-year quest.

Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy by Sonya Sones is a collection of short, intense poems based on the author's own experiences a thirteen-year-old girl who suffers through her own shifting feelings about her sister's mental illness.

* The *Uglies* Series (*Uglies, Pretties, Specials, Extras*) by Scott Westerfeld and Rodrigo Corral is a group of science fiction novels that follow the high-tech adventures of Tally Youngblood who works to take down a society created to function with perfect-looking people who never had a chance to think for themselves.

The *Warrior* Series by Erin Hunt is a collection of several fantasy novels (*Firestar's Quest, Dawn, Sunrise, Long Shadows* to name some) featuring cats as characters.

The *Wild at Heart* Series by Laurie Halse Anderson has many titles with teenagers as characters involved in various issues around animal care. (NOLS)

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

Titles for High School Students

Quoted material comes from students.

Canyons by Gary Paulsen is a novel that tells the story of two boys, though separated by time and culture, who both face the challenges of entering manhood.

**Catch-22* by Joseph Heller is an intensely serious comedy that exposes the madness of war, human nature, and institutions. Set in the latter years of World War II, this novel “contains more humor than three hours of television.”

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger is a coming-of-age novel that features a narrator who “is not fake and goes through things that people in high school go through.” “He is an interesting character and you relate to him on so many levels.”

A Child Called “It” by Dave Pelzer is a memoir of a young boy growing up and struggling to survive an abusive mother. It’s “an emotional eye-opener” that “will teach you life lessons” and “will keep you hooked.”

City of Bones by Cassandra Clare is a fantasy novel about a teenager who discovers she can see supernatural beings that no one else can. “It’s a fast-paced adventure, but it still manages to be funny and have a little romance. It also has an interesting plot that keeps the reader guessing throughout.”

Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card is a science fiction novel that tells the story of Ender Wiggin, who thinks he is only playing computer-simulated war games but is really commanding the last great fleet on Earth.

The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien is a classic fantasy novel that “provides an adventure and it shows how the little guy can be a hero.”

The Host by Stephenie Meyer is a science fiction/romance novel about an alien race called souls who take over Earth and its inhabitants because they believe humans are too violent. “It constantly throws in new twists so you never want to put it down. It also makes you think about the future and humanity.”

Maus: A Survivor’s Tale by Art Spiegelman is a graphic novel that tells the tragic story of his family and the Holocaust’s devastating effects on them.

**Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is a classic romantic novel set in early 19th century England. Students “would like this book because of the language it uses and the relevance to the real world.” It “has a very interesting plot that constantly keeps you guessing.”

Appendix D, cont.

Summer Reading Lists

Running with the Buffaloes by Chris Lear is the inspirational account of the 1998 University of Colorado cross country team. “It is a demonstration of how hard it is to be great.” (Not available in NOLS)

**Slaughter-House Five* by Kurt Vonnegut is “both a strange science fiction story and a biting satire of society” that contains “both truth and humor.” It focuses on the firebombing of Dresden, Germany during World War II.

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher “is an easy read, but at the same time it’s heart-wrenching.” This story of a girl’s suicide “makes you really think about how everybody is, in one way or another, connected and how so many little things can add up to something big, without anybody realizing it.”

This Boy’s Life by Tobias Wolff is “an entertaining memoir about the author’s childhood. It is honest and outlines many of his flaws as well as those around him. It’s also interesting because the author spent much of his childhood in the Pacific Northwest.”

A Walk to Remember by Nicholas Sparks is “a very interesting love story” that draws “the reader into where they never want to stop reading it.” It is a coming-of-age story about the perfect innocence of a first love.

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water by Michael Dorris, a novel that examines the relationships between a daughter, her Native American mother, and a grandmother, “is a story of a girl’s life and her struggles growing up. It’s easy reading and the main ideas are clearly given.”

Appendix E

Looking Ahead, February Writing in Fourth Grade

Looking Ahead

February Writing in Fourth Grade

Before Looking Ahead, let's **LOOK BACK** at January. In January...

- You used Fletcher's *Launch Unit* to refocus and re-energize your students for writing.
- You probably revisited routines and procedures for Writer's Workshop expectations and behaviors.
- Hopefully your students came together as a community of writers, and were able to verbally share writing ideas with one another. This also would give them an opportunity to be a productive and effective partner in regards to feedback.

In February...(Looking Ahead):

- The Pacing Guide leaves February open for Nonfiction Writing. Check out www.writingfix.com and then go to [Writing Across the Curriculum](#). There are tons of lessons for History and Science writing using picture books/texts that students will engage with! If you want to integrate your curriculum this is a great place to start!
- Another resource for quick and to the point Nonfiction lesson plans is: **Nonfiction Craft Lessons**, by Joann Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher. It is sectioned by grade bands and very teacher- friendly.
- You can continue to work on an Elaboration Module that fits with the Nonfiction unit so that it is taught in the context of their writing. The Prewriting Module called Alphabetic Taxonomy is a beginner prewriting strategy that works well with nonfiction writing.
- Modeling is still *so* important, even for 4th graders! Giving them time to practice the strategies and try them out in different pieces of writing is one of the keys to success.
- Make sure students know their audience and purpose for what they are writing before they start writing.
- Remember, in the classroom where writing happens regularly and instruction in writing happens regularly, students need not fear a writing assessment. (Fletcher)
- Have students work with the end in mind...what type of publishing will be done with the writing? (ideas listed at the end of the lessons) This will help with the organization piece. It will also help students revise as they go.
- Listed below are the Nonfiction lesson plans from Ralph Fletcher's TQW. You may be finishing up with these, or just beginning, depending on how you paced your class the last 2 months.

Appendix E, cont.

Looking Ahead, February Writing in Fourth Grade

Nonfiction Unit of Study, (TOW) Ralph Fletcher

February Lessons and Teaching Points

(Nonfiction spans December, January, and February)

| Lesson Card Number and Title | Teaching Points, Tips |
|---|---|
| L-18 Use a Natural Voice | Students are taught that nonfiction writing needs to have the element of voice. Students look at different phrases that authors of nonfiction use to insert voice into their writing. |
| D-10 Find the Right Distance by Pulling in Close | Students explore how using voice and details helps the writer come closer to their topic. |
| D-11 Find the Right Distance by Pulling Back | Students look at pulling back from writing to give the reader a larger perspective. What important information is the writer forgetting to include? |
| D-1 Anticipate What the Audience Expects | Students are given an explicit strategy to think about their reader. By asking questions about the topic, the writer can organize their writing. |
| D-9 Capture the Power of One | By featuring “one” instead of a group in writing, the reader is able to connect more easily with the plight of an individual. |
| I-14 Use Authentic Details | Students choose details to help sharpen the focus and write in an authoritative voice. |
| D-6 Use Subtitles to Organize Your Writing | Using subtitles help to bring order to research. |
| D-20 Open with a Scene | Students try writing a scene to lead their reader into their writing. |
| D-18 Lead with a Question | Another strategy for writing a lead is to ask a question that intrigues the reader. |
| L-24 Use Vocabulary Specific to a Subject | When using specialized vocabulary the writer needs to understand the words first, and then explain them to the reader. The back of the card has to very clear examples of how to incorporate specialized vocabulary in a clear way. |
| D-5 Use a Transition Between Ideas | Using transitions is introduced to help with the choppiness of student writing. This is a sophisticated concept. |
| I-19 Make a Comparison | Writers help us see the world in new ways when they make a comparison that is unusual and interesting. |

Appendix E, cont.

Looking Ahead, February Writing in Fourth Grade

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|--|---|
| P-4 Use Commas to List Ideas GLE 3.2.3 (sentences) | By using commas to list things students can shift to writing more complex sentences. |
| P-7 Use the Ellipsis | Students look at how ellipses can be used in a practical way and also in a way to create mood. |
| L-16 Avoid Passive Verbs | Overusing passive verbs weakens writing. Students look at how to change sentences from passive to active. |

Publishing Possibilities:

brochure, feature article, report, bulletin board display, event or object description, oral report

Key notes about teaching Nonfiction Writing (from Regie Routman, Writing Essentials)

- Expository writing develops more slowly than narrative writing.
- Don't overload students with nonfiction writing that requires a lot of research. Teaching students to do the research is more challenging and requires a separate, intensive teaching focus.
- Summarizing is a prerequisite for writing a successful report.
- Provide more time for browsing nonfiction (after you've modeled how to browse) and immersing children in the genre before expecting them to write.

A Framework for Teaching Writing Genres
(Writing Essentials, Regie Routman)

- Find out what kids know about the genre, and chart responses.
- Gather lots of examples of the genre at a level appropriate for most of your students.
- Let students, in pairs or small groups, browse through these materials. Model first.
- Discuss and chart, "What makes a good (blank)?"
- With students, choose one text to study together.
- Write in the genre together as a class. Use the language of the genre. Refer to chart you created.
- Identify additional criteria for what to include when writing in the genre.
- Prepare to write- students gather resources, brainstorm ideas...
- Write for a sustained period in the form of the genre for an authentic audience and purpose.
- Confer with students and teach what is needed. (Celebrate, assess, teach, revise, edit)
- Publish and share with intended audience.
- Encourage students to write more pieces in the genre.

Appendix F

Looking Ahead, October Writing in Second Grade

Looking Ahead

October Writing in Second Grade

Before Looking Ahead, let's **LOOK BACK** at September. In September...

- Launching the Writing Workshop concepts (sessions) should have helped to introduce writing workshop expectations and procedures.
- Students should have many pieces of “writing” (this includes drawings) to look back at and see they have many stories to tell.
- Students will have come to expect that they will write each day.
- Students have been exposed to many read alouds, experiencing many types of authors. They may even have favorite authors by now and are able to tell you why they like the author.

In October... (Looking Ahead)

- Continue reinforcing expectations for writing. (We all have a story to tell.)
- Bring out stories into the classroom verbally when students come in telling you something that happened to them. Many students make connections (That happened to me too...) and realize they could write a story like this too.
- Nearly every child should be able to choose a topic, envision it, and record it on a page (by some means). If this is not true for your class, spend a few more days teaching variations of lesson 1-4 in book 1 of Calkins. These lessons are the building blocks to success!
- Remember to use the “Time to Confer” and the “If Students Need More Time” sections to lengthen practice on certain concepts. These ideas are helpful in supporting the teacher in meeting the varying needs of many students.
- Start to really utilize the “Teaching Share” portion of the Writing Workshop. This is where students will get ideas for upcoming pieces. Some students will be like a “celebrity” sharing the very smart writing strategy they used that day. The teacher can directly relate this portion to the mini-lessons and show how students are trying out what the teacher showed them earlier. This time can be done in a way that is simple and short, but effective. Get students to tell you about what they are writing. Draw out more of their content and say, “You definitely need to write that!”
- As the teacher, you need to refer back to prior teaching/mini-lessons if you want your students to do so. (Charts are helpful in this area.)

Appendix F, cont.

Looking Ahead, October Writing in Second Grade

October Unit of Study: Small Moments: Personal Narrative Writing, Lucy Calkins

You know your class best. You decide what lessons can be skipped, stretched out, or taught to a small group. Not all lessons are a perfect match and may need to be revised for your students. If you are using a Mentor Text to illustrate a writing strategy, be sure to read it as a read aloud prior to the lesson so children have heard it before. This shortens up your mini-lesson time because you can go directly to the part of the book you want to teach from.

| Session Name | Teaching points, Tips, and GLEs |
|--|---|
| <p>Session 1: Understanding a Small Moment Story</p> <p>If students need more time with this, try writing a class shared story about something experienced together.</p> | <p>Students are asked to write across several pages in small booklets. (Have a parent prepare these.)</p> <p>Students learn that in true stories from our lives, one thing happens and then the next and next. Use a familiar, loved book to illustrate this point. (Owl Moon, The Snowy Day, Rollercoaster)</p> <p>GLE</p> |
| <p>Session 2: Discovering One Small Moment</p> <p>Try some of the ideas at the end of the lesson if students have trouble zooming in.</p> | <p>The teacher writes a story in the air that zooms in on one moment, demonstrating thinking hard, and picturing the moment while putting it on the page. Make the chart in this lesson, and refer to it as the days go on. Keep adding to it!</p> <p>GLE 4.1.2- (Analyzes, evaluates writing)</p> |
| <p>Session 3: Establishing Long-Term Partnerships</p> <p>Students will need a lot of modeling and practice over many days.</p> | <p>Partnerships are established and partners are given jobs to do together. This lesson will need to be revisited often, and taught explicitly.</p> <p>GLE 4.1.2 (Analyzes, evaluates writing)</p> |
| <p>Session 4: Stretching One Small Moment</p> | <p><u>The Kissing Hand</u> by Audrey Penn could be used as the exemplar text. This lesson encourages students to learn from other authors who tell small moments across their pages. Students will be encouraged to plan their writing by touching each page and saying what they will write on that page to their partner.</p> <p>GLE 1.1.1 (Pre-write)</p> <p>GLE 1.2.1 (Produces drafts)</p> |
| <p>Session 5: Stretching and Writing Words</p> | <p>This lesson is great for the student that asks how to spell many words and is worried about perfect spelling vs. getting the content out.</p> <p>GLE 3.3.2 (Writing conventions)</p> |

Appendix F, cont.

Looking Ahead, October Writing in Second Grade

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| <p>Session 6: Sketching Rather than Drawing</p> <p>(Perfect for the student who wants to spend the whole workshop drawing!)</p> | <p>This lesson teaches the difference between sketching and drawing, emphasizing that sketching is appropriate in the writing workshop so we can reserve time for writing.</p> |
| <p>Session 7: Planning Details</p> <p>If more time is needed, show a bare bones story and a detailed version. Talk about it together. Model the process of writing as well.</p> | <p>Have a focused moment from the class' recent, everyday life ready. Students are encouraged to plan detailed stories by saying detailed stories aloud before writing them.</p> <p>GLE 1.1.1 (Pre-write) GLE 1.2.1 (Produces drafts) GLE 3.1.1 (Ideas and organization)</p> |
| <p>Session 8: Internalizing Story Shapes</p> <p>The more stories children hear the more children will take on the rhythms and designs in their own stories. READ, READ, READ ALOUD!</p> | <p>Children are taught the strategy of telling a story across their fingers to help them produce stories with a beginning, middle, and end. This is another strategy students can add to their toolbox. Not all students will use it every time/at all.</p> <p>GLE 1.1.1 (Pre-write)</p> |
| <p>Session 9: Storytelling with Partners</p> | <p>Students will practice telling stories across their fingers to their partners. The purpose is to coax more literary language and elaboration out of the storytellers.</p> <p>GLE 3.2.1 (Uses appropriate style.) GLE 3.3.2 (Uses variety of words.)</p> |
| <p>Session 10: Writing Some Words in a Snap</p> | <p>The teacher will show children that there are words they "just know" and can spell easily, and the word wall contains other words that they'll know very soon.</p> <p>GLE 3.3.2 (Writing conventions)</p> |
| <p>Session 11: Focusing on the Most Important Part</p> | <p>The teacher will demonstrate that writers think "What is the most important part of my story?" and they make that aspect important by adding details to that part and cutting away other parts.</p> <p>GLE 1.3.1 (Revises to improve text.) GLE 3.1.1 (Ideas and organization)</p> |
| <p>Session 12: Revealing Internal Stories</p> | <p>The students will learn to reveal the internal stories (reactions, thoughts, observations, feelings) in their pieces. Try to have an example of this type of writing <i>from a child</i> ready to share.</p> <p>GLE 3.1.1 (Ideas and organization)</p> |

Appendix F, cont.

Looking Ahead, October Writing in Second Grade

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| Session 13: Writing Close-In Story Endings | Have a shared experience writing ready with a less than great ending. Students will learn some guidelines for writing effective story endings, suggesting it often helps to stay close to the heart of the story. GLE 1.5.1 (Publishing) |
| Session 14: Revising and Editing with Partners | Students learn some strategies for making revisions to their pieces, and how to help support their partner's revisions. GLE 1.3.1 (Revises to improve text.) GLE 1.4.1 (Edits text) |
| Session 15: Reading Aloud for Visitors: An Author's Celebration <i>Be sure to do this in some way!</i> | This lesson is designed to have students read their writing to reading buddies. If you do not have reading buddies, invite other staff in, have a neighboring class come and read, or invite family members. |

Suggested Revision Lessons from The Craft of Revision, by Lucy Calkins:

Session 1: Introducing Revision

Show students how to reread a story they have written, and revise by adding details.

Session 2: Adding into the Middles of Texts

Introduce tools a writer uses to insert new text into the midst of the draft.

Session 7: Teaching Children to Confer About Writing

Students learn how to answer the question: "What are you working on as a writer?"

Session 8: Showing, Not Telling

Students learn that when they revise a good strategy is showing instead of telling.

Session 9: Learning More About Showing, Not Telling

Using children's literature the teacher will be able to illustrate the value of making images in writing.

These lessons can be done in between the other lessons, as a mid-workshop teaching point, or in small group strategy sessions. If a student is already using one of these strategies, highlight it in the Teaching Share portion of the Writing Workshop.