Illinois English Bulletin

IATE is a professional organization for teachers of English/language arts. IATE publishes the *Illinois English Bulletin* and the *IATE Newsletter* and hosts an annual fall conference. IATE is organized by districts throughout the state, each district having a district leader and providing local activities to members throughout the year.

IATE also maintains standing committees that address a number of professional interests and works with other professional organizations to further the interests of teachers. Composed of nearly 1,000 teachers throughout the state, IATE provides a working network for the exchange of teaching tips, current research, and professional development as well as enduring friendships.

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INTRODUCTION TO
THE *ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN* 101.2 (SPRING 2014)

JANICE NEULEIB

Welcome to the Spring Issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. Four of these five works originated at the fall IATE conference held in Normal, Illinois, last October 2013. The four invited essays demonstrate how the presenters used the issues surrounding the Common Core to help teachers achieve the richness and riskiness asked for in the Core. This laudable goal often clashes with demands for accountability and reporting because rich, risky, and creative teaching and learning collide with a system that thrives off grades and numbers. Yet the two can coexist and even prosper as these essays and the final report all demonstrate.

First, our keynote speaker Mary Kay Morrison touched on a powerful belief that has, for me, been the core of my teaching and learning. The world can be either serious or humorous,

and I choose humorous, as does Mary Kay. She stresses in her list of outcomes and on her website that students learn more deeply and happily when humor underpins the classroom. Let me give an example that speaks to me at this stage of my life: compare *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. They are of course Shakespeare's final great and powerful works, and they both deal with issues of power and progeny. Lear sees his waning world with anger and a sense of lost entitlement whereas Prospero creates from his dying powers a new world, safer for the young and happier for all. Lear curses the darkness; Prospero lightens it with laughter. I have always wanted to write an essay countering Matthew Arnold's "High Seriousness" with one of my own on High Silliness. I shall not write that essay here, but Morrison has done so explicitly and implicitly in her examples. Joy comes of a lightness and optimism even in the face of inevitable challenges and disappointments.

    Angelique Burrell, Heather Fehrman, and Jared W. Friebel, and Elizabeth Kahn, Carolyn Walter, and Thomas M. McCann demonstrate in their essays that active learning in writing rhetorically and reading interactively assure interested, engaged, and successful students. Both essays provide examples that will help readers bring these lessons to their own classrooms. Teachers can adapt these samples to their own syllabuses or create new lesson plans that will incorporate the ideas. All in all, these two essays will demonstrate for readers a means to a most desirable end.

    Kristin Runyon uses original documents and art found on the web to enhance her classroom. The world has turned, and turned forcefully toward giving us information and beauty at our fingertips. Runyon shows how this immediacy can enhance a classroom activity or become a tool for students in their own writing and reading. Her examples will trigger new thinking in readers and help us each to say, "I can do that."

Finally, Lisa Castleman and Jill Uhlman present us with a carefully designed study to show that these ideas about creativity and active learning can be measured and evaluated. Their study provides us as teachers with a means and method for speaking to administrators, parents, and community about the need for a system that does indeed flip old ideas of passive learning and silent solitary homework with lively and interactive classrooms. The report gives both the data and the activities that led to the data. We can learn from the study and adapt it to our own worlds of accountability and reporting.

As always, I want to thank all these authors, especially those I chased down at the conference and hounded for their papers. I am so grateful for our brilliant and committed community of IATE members. Then, as ever, I thank Danielle Duvick, assistant director of the English Department's Publications Unit at Illinois State University, and her staff for their hard work in making our elegant *Bulletin*. IATE owes the Publications Unit a constant debt of gratitude.

THE TOP TEN REASONS HUMOR IS *FUN*DAMENTAL FOR LEARNING

MARY KAY MORRISON

Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.

Humor is just the fertilizer needed to nurture stressed kids and anxious educators as they cope with the cognitive/technological revolution that is shaping twenty-first-century education. Humor is rarely looked at as an essential part of student growth or as a credible teaching technique. However, a review of neuroscience research indicates that healthy and positive humor can have a significant impact on student learning. The purposeful cultivation of humor practice nourishes both effective teaching and learning!

Here are the top ten reasons that flourishing educators purposefully choose humor as an essential teaching strategy:

10. Humor plants memories. Powerful emotions are at the root of long-term memory. Ask your students what their strongest memory of school has been so far. Have them categorize how they felt about this experience by charting these memories as either joyful or anxiety-producing. Encourage students to think about why they remember this incident. Discuss how they can use humor (a strong emotion), as a device to help them remember information.
When the memory goes—forget it!

9. Humor grows coping skills. Humor has often been used as a survival technique for prisoners of war. Educators need to survive constant change with new mandates and testing requirements coming frequently from policy makers and legislators. There are numerous "survival" issues in education today! Some research indicates that laughter increases adrenaline, oxygen flow, and pulse rate. After laughter, most people report feeling relaxed and calm.
No sense being pessimistic—it wouldn't work anyway!

8. Humor cultivates energy and engagement. The traditional auditory lecture is one of the least effective ways to facilitate learning. Purposeful games, directed play, and physical activity all promote humor and learning. The research on the benefits of movement and learning supports the idea that play and laughter increase the oxygen levels and energy that are critical for learning.
Energizer Bunny arrested; charged with battery!

7. Humor captures and retains attention. Laughter and surprise can hook even the most reluctant student. "Emotion drives attention and attention drives learning" (Sylwester). The brain cannot learn if it is not attending. Humor generates something unexpected, which alerts the attentional center of

the brain and increases the likelihood of information recall. It can be integrated into all aspects of the learning process as described by the Educators Tackle Box in *Using Humor to Maximize Learning* (Morrison). The purposeful use of humor is a skill that can be practiced and enhanced. A favorite follow-up strategy is to invite the students to read a section of the lesson and create a joke or riddle about that segment. Some of these can be used in the actual test for the chapter.
Lost in thought—it's unfamiliar territory!

6. Humor neutralizes stress. Humor will decrease depression, loneliness, and anger. The contagious nature of laughter is caused by mirror neurons, so if you see someone laughing, even if you don't know the reason for the laughter, you will probably laugh anyway. The imitative behavior is due to mirror neurons being stimulated. Stress levels have been increasing for both students and teachers. Laughter is contagious. Catch it! Spread it!
He who laughs—lasts!

5. Humor is the #1 characteristic students value in a teacher. They may not remember what you taught, but they will remember your sense of humor and the relationships *produced* in the classroom. Build a "Humor Haven" in your classroom filled with joke, riddle, and humorous storybooks. Depending on the age of your students, you can add clown noses, squish balls, games, and puzzles. Make their day every single day with laughter and fun. It will make your day too!
What would Scooby do?

4. Humor enhances creativity. The employment market has transitioned from agriculture and manufacturing jobs to positions requiring ingenuity and inventiveness. Humor promotes creativity and critical thinking skills. Often humor comes from

unconnected, random thoughts. Grow creativity through laughter yoga, telling funny stories, or playing games.
Do not disturb, I am disturbed enough already!

3. Humor facilitates communication. Humor is a great way to build relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. Understanding your humor style will assist your humor practice. Humor is a social lubricant. It has the power to generate a culture of trust in your organization. If you understand and nurture a constructive humor style, it will positively impact your ability to communicate. Humorous interaction between coworkers encourages a healthy, productive work environment.
A closed mouth gathers no foot!

2. Humor supports the change process. Educators are faced with change on a daily basis. When you can laugh about new mandates or disruptive behavior issues, you know you are able to cope with these challenges. Plan for how you and your colleagues will use humor to cope with new standards, testing, or stressed kids. A great strategy is to create a top ten list of "What's So Funny?" about the upcoming change.
Change is good—you go first!

And now for the number one reason to laugh frequently and often…
1. Humor is FREE and FUN. Teaching is a joyful experience. The current focus on accountability and data-driven instruction can bury our sense of humor, driving it underground. Dig around for humor resources to share with your students and colleagues. Do not let anything rob you of your passion for bringing joy to your students and remember a sense of humor is free and fun!
I want to live forever—so far so good!

Hold your ground when it comes to your beliefs about how to plant the seeds of learning in your workplace. Weed out the humor-doomers and their negative comments. Do not give them the time or energy required to creep into the culture of learning in your environment.

Nurture the nuts in your care. Nurture your own sense of humor by spending time in developing and growing your humor practice. Consider keeping a humor journal, spending time with colleagues who make you laugh, and purposefully including humor in every lesson every day. Carefully cultivate your *humor being* to fully share the abundance of joyful teaching. Remember humor is a *fun*damental factor in the cognitive / technological revolution that needs to shape twenty-first-century education.

Never take life too seriously—you won't get out alive.

Works Cited

Morrison, Mary Kay. *Using Humor to Maximize Learning: The Links Between Positive Emotions and Education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008. Print.

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Ideas for improving your humor practice can be found in Morrison's book, Using Humor to Maximize Learning: The Links between Positive Emotions and Education. *For links to the research supporting the use of humor in learning, please go to Morrison's links page on her website www.questforhumor.com. Check out her blog, Humor Quest, at humorquest.blogspot.com. Morrison serves on the board of Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH; www.aath.org) and was the* Humor: No Laughing Matter Conference *cochair. Contact her at marykay@questforhumor.com.*

USING AUTHENTICITY TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO THINK RHETORICALLY AND TO CELEBRATE THEIR NONFICTION WRITING

ANGELIQUE BURRELL, HEATHER FEHRMAN, AND JARED W. FRIEBEL

Walking into Hinsdale Central's gym, visitors and students are immediately made aware of the school's athletic prowess. Championship banners stream from the rafters, representing a variety of sports, ranging a timespan of nearly one hundred years. While this image might not differentiate Hinsdale Central from a number of other high schools across the state, it does differentiate the school's athletic program from the academic curriculum. Why is it that, as educators, we celebrate accomplishments that occur in the gym or on the field by providing them with banners and trophies, which establish a legacy, yet fail to tangibly honor those that occur in the classroom?

Addressing this question was one of the driving factors that inspired us to redesign a course entitled Honors

Seminar in Writing. Athletics provide authentic learning experiences. Student athletes are given purpose (to perform certain strategies to win); audience (fans, followers, and opponents); and subject (the rules of the game)—concepts that should not be foreign to anyone teaching writing in a rhetorical sense. Yet, in many writing classrooms, there is little rhetorical basis. Student papers are typically read by whom James Moffett refers to as "the same old person, the English teacher" (quoted in Mansfield 71). Students turn in their papers, get them stamped with grades, and file them away—oftentimes, not even looking at the comments the teachers have made. In effect, students do not even care about their sole audience member, the teacher. Consequently, the rhetorical capacity of writing is often not reached in high school, and, when students graduate, they have ingrained the ideas that writing develops a product to be read by one person and the primary purpose of developing writing is evaluation—which, for most written documents in school, are no small misconceptions.

Much more can be gained from high school writing if students are given opportunities to participate in authentic writing experiences. Authenticity—in the context of teaching writing—should be defined as reading and writing that are incorporated in an activity when students are immersed in situations that require them to think through and develop communicative strategies (including writing a number of texts) for audiences, other than only their teachers, for a purpose beyond earning a grade. Often forgotten in the teaching of writing are the implications of any rhetorical situation which include the writer, audience, and subject. Having an audience for their writing will give students a sense of purpose as they construct their texts, motivating them and guiding them as they shape the manner in which they think through

the subjects they are focused on in their texts. Essentially, students will gain the capacity to become real writers.

While authenticity was one motivator behind our development of Honors Seminar in Writing, the second is the responsibility we have to exposing our students to nonfiction. For a multitude of reasons, some English departments are feeling burdened by the shift to Common Core's emphasis on informational texts. As you will see in this paper, one of our primary contentions is that nonfiction can and should be studied and developed in a creative sense because of the rhetorical opportunities it can unleash for students, many of whom will not need to solely construct thesis-driven analyses upon high school graduation as they tackle other academic and professional pursuits.

The real conundrum of this nonfiction push—and whether or not it should be a conundrum—should be considered with two quotes, one from Lee Gutkind in his article, "The Age of the Expert," which appeared in the journal *Creative Nonfiction*, and a longer but noteworthy one excerpted from Robert Root's *The Nonfictionist's Guide*.

> Many books being published today about "brainy" subjects are not written by "real" experts—that is, by actual scientists or researchers. If creative nonfiction writers are willing to reach past their coming-of-age memoirs and the types of personal narratives [that focus solely on the self], they can turn themselves into experts through research and study, and produce narratives that teach readers about science or architecture or medicine or… anything, really. (Gutkind)

> This may well be a golden age of nonfiction. The books, the essays, and articles in our literary journals, magazines,

and Internet websites, the extension of nonfiction into film, graphic memoirs, video essays, weblogs, and online essays, the experimental and exploratory and idiosyncratic approaches—this is a very good time to be an essayist, a travel writer, a nature writer, a memoirist, an immersion journalist, an experimental critic, a writer willing to explore self and place and genre and venture into new literary territory as well as draw on traditional forms and strategies.

I think writers should explore it all in their reading, come to understand the full range of possibility in the fourth genre, and veer in the direction their writing leads them. […]

Nonfiction is a literary genre as unbounded and expansive as any other. It is capable of drawing on the narrative, lyric, dramatic, meditative, reflective, and referential modes available to the other genres. If you want to be a nonfictionist, start exploring what you want to know about yourself and about your world, then plunge into the process of discovery—find out what the writing can teach you about what you need to know, explore what the writing needs to be. The nonfictionist needs to be flexible, open, and exploratory too. Nonfiction is limited only by the imagination and insight of the writer; it can accomplish anything the writer—and the writing—needs it to do. (Root)

Honors Seminar in Writing has been built so that we can challenge students to explore their lives and the world around them with a more critical view and to shape those perceptions through writing that allows for the same devices that we often study in poetry, drama, and fiction.

Course Overview

Honors Seminar in Writing (HSW) is a year-long, honors-level course. With *Best American Essays* (*BAE*) providing a textual foundation for our curriculum, we immerse seniors in a full-year study of four key subgenres within creative nonfiction: memoir, cultural criticism, personal essay, and literary journalism. As a culminating activity, students serve as guest editors for our department's anthology, *The Best Nonfiction Writing: Hinsdale Central*—which includes writing from each of the seminar students and from a variety of other students, freshmen through seniors—that has been published four times and is circulated through the school library and several libraries in surrounding communities.

Students who take this course are students who have typically taken AP Language and Composition as juniors, though we do occasionally get students from regular college-prep-level English courses. While some students who take HSW also take AP Literature and Composition as seniors, most forego an AP course to enroll in our class. While we can't put the AP label on the course for obvious reasons, the rigor of the course is commensurate with an AP class and is most certainly a college-level course. In fact, the small-group, workshop structure of the course mirrors a college-level course more than any other we offer in our department.

We begin the year by familiarizing students with each of the subgenres of creative nonfiction through a study of various essays from that year's *Best American Essays*, edited by Robert Atwan. Students have read this book for summer reading, making it a logical starting point. We typically choose a handful of essays from the book to discuss that represent the four subgenres. It is during those discussions that students begin to discern the differences among the subgenres and see how writers sometimes blend them, as well.

Before students begin experimenting with the various subgenres, we have them complete an analysis of their writing style using a P.J. Corbett-inspired stylistic analysis, which is a form of analysis that requires students to collect data in relation to various features related to syntax and diction. The goal of this assignment is to allow students to see what kind of stylistic choices they make as writers and to see how those choices compare with several professional writers. This is often the first time that students have really examined what they do as writers and where their unique voices as writers originate. The increased awareness that students gain from this process gives them a good basis for experimentation, something we strongly encourage as the year progresses.

The focus, then, for the rest of the year, is to study and practice the four subgenres of creative nonfiction. During first quarter, in addition to the stylistic analysis, we also workshop students' college essays. This is an introduction to the workshop process with an essay that seniors are already required to write, and it helps build the collaborative environment. The first major writing assignment is a memoir, a subgenre that most are familiar with that involves little to no research. This subgenre provides us with a foundation to study the elements of creative nonfiction (i.e. blending expression and reflection, stylistic decisions, arrangement, character development, etc.) before we move on to second quarter, when students write a cultural criticism and a personal essay. These second quarter subgenres entail a greater use of research and move the student writers to look more outside themselves.

During third quarter, students write a piece of literary journalism and then what we call "Just Write," which allows students to revisit one of the four subgenres or blend the subgenres. The choice is theirs. During fourth quarter, students are involved in the selection and editing process for *The Best*

Nonfiction Writing: Hinsdale Central anthology, and they revise a previously written piece for publication in the anthology, which is detailed in the next section.

The two semesters break down roughly as follows:

Semester 1: *What is Creative Nonfiction?*

- P.J. Corbett Stylistic Analysis

- College Essay Workshops

- Focus on Subgenre: Memoir

- Focus on Subgenre: Cultural Criticism

- Focus on Subgenre: Personal Essay

- Peer Review and Critique

Semester 2: *How do I use Creative Nonfiction to reach a general audience?*

- Focus on Subgenre: Literary Journalism

- Focus on Subgenre: Just Write

- Focus on Revision of Publishable Text

- Peer Review and Critique

- Anthology Selection and Editing Processes

Regardless of which subgenre students are working with, the writing process we follow in the course is essentially the same. We are always engaging students in various invention strategies to get them thinking about potential topic ideas. These may include free writes—both prompted and open-ended—map-making, timelines, scene writing, etc. These invention exercises are geared toward the subgenre we are studying. For instance, invention exercises during the memoir unit focus on students' families and memories and experiences growing up.

In addition to invention exercises, students are reading and analyzing mentor texts by professional writers and former students. Students read and annotate these texts, examining both stylistic elements and qualities specific to the particular subgenre. We use these critical reading journals, as we call them, to guide our discussions of these mentor texts in class.

Following the invention exercises and critical reading journals and discussions, students develop topic ideas for a particular assignment. (For an annotated list of resources, see Appendix A.) We workshop those ideas together as a group, offering students feedback on the feasibility of the ideas and suggestions for what direction students might take. These brainstorming sessions often result in entirely new topic ideas than originally presented.

Once students have decided on a topic for an essay, they have a week or two to put together what Stephen King, in his book *On Writing*, calls a "reader's draft" of the essay. Students and teachers get these drafts in advance to annotate and type up critiques for use during the workshop of each draft. Annotations and critiques focus on the strengths of the drafts and areas for improvement—both at the micro and macro levels. The writer also often presents the class with several specific questions to consider while reading the draft. During the workshops, which are typically half a period or twenty-five minutes per student, we discuss everything from the writer's exigence to the arrangement of the piece to diction and syntax. Students take these annotations, critiques, and workshops quite seriously. In fact, students often report it is the first time that anyone other than a teacher has given them truly useful and genuine feedback on a piece of writing. For both teachers and students alike, this is probably the most productive and rewarding part of the writing process.

Beyond the workshops, students are given additional time—one to two weeks—to make revisions to their essays based on the feedback they have received. Students often schedule additional conferences outside of class to look at revisions. Many students also seek each other out outside of class to share revisions and get additional feedback. Some students create Facebook pages for this purpose or even get together at a student's home to continue the workshop process. This atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration speaks to the students' dedication and genuine interest in growing as writers.

The final "step" in the writing process is for students to share their final drafts with the class with a reading of their pieces during class, just as professional writers often do. This is a celebration of students' efforts, and hearing students proudly read their final drafts aloud in their own voices is a fitting and gratifying conclusion to the writing process for the writer and audience alike.

Book-Production Process

During fourth quarter, the *Best American Essays* series serves as our model for the creation and publication of *The Best Nonfiction Writing: Hinsdale Central*. Just as *Best American Essays* has a series editor, Robert Atwan, the teachers of Honors Seminar in Writing act as the series editors. Each year's HSW students are the guest editors, and they play a pivotal role in selecting the student writing that will be included. But the process actually begins with the classroom teachers, who create assignments that inspire purpose and reflect real-world writing.

In April, teachers provide us with the names of students who have written essays that stand out. Our department chair then sends letters to their homes—so the parents are more

likely to see them—recognizing the students for writing essays of exceptional merit and inviting them to submit an essay for consideration for publication in the upcoming edition of *The Best Nonfiction Writing: Hinsdale Central*. To date, we have mailed over 630 letters home.

Each year, the number of students that teachers recognize increases, the number of letters mailed home increases, and, more importantly, the number of students who see themselves as writers increases. And, as we add editions to the series, the number of student-written mentor texts increases. This year, we will publish our fifth book in the series. In the four books since 2010, we have published the essays of over two hundred students, from freshmen through seniors.

The active process of creating the book, from determining who will be published to sending files to the publisher, runs from April through the end of the school year. In April, when submissions open, we accept only one essay per student for consideration. We limit the number of essays each student may submit for a couple of reasons. First, we want to encourage discussions about which piece is best and why; the student can have those conversations with parents, a teacher, friends, anyone—we want to create a dialogue about good writing. Second, when we did not stipulate an essay limit, some students submitted three or four essays. Aside from an avoidance of decision-making and failure to have conversations about good writing, it increased the reading load for our student editors.

Once essays are submitted, we separate them by graduation year and make sure that there is no identifying information on them. Since the selection process is a part of our curriculum, we take approximately five class days for students to read and score essays. We have at least ten readers on each essay—with a limit of five readers from any one class

in order to avoid class bias. Students score the essays based on the NCTE scoring guidelines, starting with the freshman writers and moving up through the grades. During the scoring, we review qualities of good writing in order to set our expectations for the various grade levels; this has sparked thoughtful conversations with students about how writing and writers mature through the years.

Once the scoring is complete, the teachers of the course meet to calculate scores and decide the pieces to publish from among the top essays. Throughout this process, the essays are anonymous and every effort is made to remove teacher bias. We look for the highest quality of writing that best represents our student population.

After the selection is complete, we send letters to students indicating the state of their submission. For those who will be published, they must submit an electronic copy per formatting guidelines and return a "permission to publish" form, signed by their parents. We know that our main readership is their community, and some students write personal essays that expose a side of themselves, family members, or situations that would otherwise be unknown; therefore, we want the parents to be aware of what material is going to be published. At this time, parents can also choose to purchase additional copies of the book beyond the complimentary copy student writers will receive.

The students in HSW, as they are revising and copyediting their own essays for publication, then copyedit the student essays that have been selected. If students were uncertain about grammar and mechanics rules going in to this process, those uncertainties are gone by the time we finish. We review every comma, dash, semicolon, ellipsis, and quotation mark. Though, inevitably, errors do pass through, we make every effort to ensure the quality of the final product.

We work with the graphic design teacher to find a student to design the book cover and complete the layout. The book layout has become less time intensive as the years have gone by, which is a direct result of the time each year's designer has volunteered to make the book a success. The designer also works with the HSW teachers to create a cover design that reflects the series but shows the year's individuality. When all is done, the book files are sent to the publisher.

And, in September, each student with a published work receives a complimentary copy—we hand deliver books to students still enrolled and mail home books to those who have graduated. Invariably, shortly after the book is sent home, we get phone calls and emails about purchasing additional copies. This is why we always order extra copies when we have the funds.

Funding of this project has changed over the years. For the first four years, we wrote a yearly grant proposal to solicit the approximate $1,000 necessary to print copies of the book and apply for copyright. However, since the book has become a part of the culture at our school, we now have $1,000 per year earmarked in the school's budget for the publication of the book.

In the past, the book's introduction was written by an HSW teacher, but, as the book has become established, we have invited former HSW students to write the book's introduction. For future editions, we will have an English teacher write the foreword and former students write the introduction. By inviting past students to contribute, we are creating a link between past and present; the legacy of writing continues as the series becomes a tangible celebration—a banner on our shelves—honoring academic achievement.

Successfully Adopting the Writing Workshop in Standard English Classes

For those high school teachers not interested in or financially capable of building a curriculum that includes a course similar to Honors Seminar in Writing (that includes preselected students, three sections with ten students each, and a published anthology), writing workshops can still be used as a source of authentic writing instruction. They are actually the basis of many creative writing courses in college, especially at the graduate level. The foundation of the workshop is that students serve both as writers and as audience members, permitting the students themselves to be teachers and learners (Green 158). Typically, the class operates by students turning in copies of their work one week so that all other students can comment on it—after close reading—during the next. This organization allows students to have their work critiqued by an audience who is knowledgeable of creative writing and understands the intensely personal process involved in writing, creating a comfortable classroom environment in which all are encouraged to participate and take risks with their writing.

Although the workshop model is long-standing within college-level creative writing courses, it can be successful in a range of high school classes, as well. In hopes of promoting quality student feedback and engagement in the writing process, nearly thirteen years ago, Jared Friebel first posed the writing workshop to a class of honors freshmen when they were studying narrative-based arguments. Students were seriously critical of each other's papers and looked at each in terms of the potential it had to be a functionally arranged, thoughtful text. With equal amounts of success, Friebel facilitated the workshops with personal essays in

Composition (a course that is developed for juniors who struggle with writing); feature writing in Journalism 1 (an introductory course that enrolls students who have a range of writing abilities but who are all interested in the skill); and personal essays in Expository Writing (a college-preparatory course primarily for juniors).

For Expository Writing, in particular, Friebel used the writing workshop as the culminating activity. For the workshop, students were to create personal essays. By *essay*, however, Friebel did not mean the typical thesis-driven position paper that many educators and students have mislabeled with the word *essay*. Instead, he was referring to the subgenre that is now one of the foci of Honors Seminar in Writing, the subgenre that, according to W. Ross Winterowd, "neither… advances an argument…nor is…informative in the sense of reducing the reader's uncertainty about a topic or of supplying fresh data"; that, according to Scott Russell Sanders, is an "[experiment] in making sense of things"; and that, according to Virginia Woolf, "should start without any fixed idea of where we are going to spend the night, or when we propose to come back" because "the journey is everything" (quoted in Heilker 89, 91). In other words, Friebel was referring to the essay that attempts to clarify an issue or a problem, not to thesis-driven texts that have mistakenly and enduringly been labeled as essays.

The reason he required students to construct essays in Expository Writing was actually twofold: one, since the purpose of expository writing is to explore, the genre is fitting; two, it requires students to completely break away from the path of the five-paragraph theme and turn in the direction of a genre that requires purposeful creativity in subject development, arrangement, and style (including syntax and diction). As such, the essay provides a form of writing that

can be scrutinized in its ability to provide clarity to a complex subject or problem, and it allows students to examine writing to see if it is enjoyable to read. Creativity, clarity, and enjoyment, then, can be fairly assessed within a writing workshop when using the essay as the basis for analysis. While the five-paragraph theme, or thesis-driven position paper, is an academic subgenre that thrives on clarity, it is generally not creative and not enjoyable. Writing that is published for many to read has little in common with the five-paragraph theme and could inhibit the authentic writing experience that can be achieved in the writing workshop.

The writing workshop itself builds authenticity into the classroom because it provides students with an audience other than the teacher, a purpose other than receiving a grade, and a variety of situations. The basic setup of the workshop is that after submitting enough copies of their essays for every student to read, students facilitate a twenty-five-minute discussion on their writing. It is up to the student facilitating the discussion as to what direction it takes. Some students begin by directing their readers to specific passages because they have some distinct questions, some begin by stating the direction they intended to take, some begin with a desire for compliments, and still others allow readers to completely guide the discussion. Then, after the discussion is over, the students turn in their critiques—written in the form of a letter—so that the teacher can evaluate them for their inclusion of compliments and concrete constructive criticism before handing them all to the writer. (For clarity of this schedule and the requirements in an Expository Writing class's unit on the essay, see Appendix B.)

Although the audience is the set of peers in the class, not outsiders as the anthology allows for, many students find them to be helpful and as a provider of purpose for the

assignment. As such, an outside audience is not needed for authentic education to find its way into a writing classroom. Alex, an Expository Writing student who explored the variety of injuries he had experienced, wrote in a reflection, "I feel like I am more connected with the class when I am in this class getting feedback. I feel a greater sense of purpose in this class because in my other classes, only the teacher usually reads the work I do. This class makes the process much more purposeful."[1] Opposed to the traditional writing class, which can cause students to feel isolated from one another since they are unaware of what others are writing about, the workshop requires students to be open with one another, forcing even students who most likely never talk to communicate with one another. In Expository Writing, students frequently commented about not really knowing much about some of their peers until they read what they chose to share through writing. Because students were sharing such personal stories in their essays—everything from stories about deaths of family members to wonderings about imaginary friends to contemplations of self-image—they really did leave with a better sense of those around them who they may have seen in the halls but never really got to know.

While students felt a greater sense of purpose in their writing because they were able to participate in a community of shared personal thoughts, many also claimed to feel more purpose in developing and problem-solving their rough drafts. Most, as Maria reflected, did not even see their initial drafts as typical rough drafts:

> I definitely took into consideration that the whole class
> would be reading and critiquing my paper. This was

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[1]All students' names have been changed for the entirety of this document. The students who have been quoted graduated within the past seven years from Hinsdale Central High School in Hinsdale, IL.

> my motivation to make sure I was satisfied with the rough draft. Usually when I write rough drafts, I put forth minimal effort and make them decent enough to get the grade. This time, with an audience present, I actually tried to write a good essay and I'm really glad.

By gaining an audience, students' motivation was often increased—just as it is in the professional world when people know that their writing will be read by a number of people. When students know there will be an audience outside their teachers for what they have written, they want to leave quality impressions. Even Mike, a student who said that the audience had little effect on his topic choice because he was going to write about whatever he wanted regardless of their opinions, admitted in his reflection, "I do feel a greater sense of purpose when others read my essays because I like to see their reactions and opinions about it." The reason, we believe, so many students feel a greater sense of purpose when they know their writing will have an audience is because, for once, they feel like they will see real reactions, not evaluations stamped with a grade. Often, before looking at their teachers' comments, which are a form of reaction, students look directly at the grades they have received; many comments are not looked at unless the student is completely upset with the grade. By getting these peer reactions without grades attached to them, students are placed in more authentic writing experiences. Writers typically get reactions to their work in the professional world—not evaluations, unless they are authors who are being reviewed. In the writing workshops, the students are often writing for these reactions and not solely for grades. Because of this and the expanded audience, students gain more authentic writing experiences.

Ultimately, by seeing a variety of essays because they get to see their peers', the students are able to see that writing is

situational. Although the audience is the same for each student in this setting, the writer's purpose and subject may be—and typically is—different. This results in students creating a variety of essays. While we've already mentioned a sample of the various subjects students deal with, they also explore those foci in a number of ways. They can use a number of rhetorical modes they have been taught (narration, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, exemplification, classification and division, description, process analysis, definition), but they also use a number of organizational patterns. Some move chronologically in time while others incorporate a number of flashbacks and flash-forwards while weaving in other logical associations within their analysis. Students generally and genuinely appreciate the variety of essays generated in the writing workshop, leading them to further value the construction of audience. Stephanie wrote, "I think being an audience member has opened me up to many different doors of writing styles. I really like to see how people interpret their thoughts and how they put them down on paper. Sometimes even a catchy introduction or title can inspire my ideas when I write my next essay." Just as professional models contribute to students' ideas for creating their own essays and then problem solving how to best counter the challenges they encounter with a specific passage, so do their peers' essays. This allows them to see how different topics can be approached in different manners and the reasons behind those diverging approaches, and they learn that these differences are not coincidental; achieving purpose is situational.

Infusing Analysis with Creative Nonfiction

As an AP Literature and Composition teacher and an Honors Seminar in Writing teacher, Angelique Burrell worked to create assignments for her AP students that would continue

to develop the voice in writing that they had been building in previous years. She noted that the exigence that was apparent in their personal essays of junior year was lacking in the poetry or prose analysis of senior year. Her teaching of writing in AP had primarily been about the interpretation of literature; however, this often yielded stylistically bland writing which lacked personal investment. Working to infuse students with a greater sense of the personal relevance of literature, Burrell sought to recreate her assignments to connect literature to life.

She worked to balance the three key ways of close reading described by College Board—experiential, interpretative, and evaluative—by creating assignments that fuse literary analysis with creative nonfiction. Samples of professional creative nonfiction essays that interpret and evaluate literature—essays such as "Rude Am I in My Speech" by Caryl Philips (*BAE 2011*), "Shipwrecked" by Janna Malamud Smith (*BAE 2010*), and "The Foul Reign of 'Self-Reliance'" by Benjamin Anastas (*BAE 2012*)—are mentor texts, as well as past student essays that have been published in *The Best Nonfiction Writing: Hinsdale Central*. By giving students models of how to value, contemplate, and question the literature they study in relation to their lives, students have begun to fuse their creative voice with literary analysis to better understand literature and their world. (See Appendix C for a sample assignment.)

It's a process, to be sure, but students are able to see the value of literature in their daily lives. As Kathleen wrote in a reflection last year, "So much knowledge—about life, about the way we live, about humanity—resides within the pages of a book." This is something that English teachers have been telling their students for decades, but when a student understands that truth for herself, when she internalizes that truth in part because of the writing she has done in class, then that truth has been passed on. At the start of the 2012–2013 school

year, Burrell asked her AP students to write in response to the prompt, "Does literature matter in today's world?" At the end of the year, after incorporating several creative nonfiction writing assignments, she asked them to reevaluate what they wrote. The end results showed great promise; some students wrote about a greater understanding of humanity or themselves, some wrote about a gained ability to read their world more critically, and only a few wrote that nothing much had changed. But, as the following comments illustrate, striving for this change is well worth the effort. In September of 2012, Rachel wrote:

> "[P]erhaps I just haven't seen enough of the world. I mean I am only eighteen years old and I certainly still have a lot to learn and experience. From what I have seen, however, the literature that is taught in school doesn't really matter in our lives today. It doesn't impact our everyday decisions, it doesn't cross our minds when we're eating dinner or watching TV, and it barely makes a dent in our everyday lives."

And, in May of 2013, she revised those thoughts with:

> "Literature's influence may not manifest itself physically in our everyday lives, but it is there. Novels, poems, fictional stories do poke holes in the way we think. They challenge us to defend our ideals and our morals and the way we see the world. It's not an obvious change, but it's subtle, and because of it, we become better people."

Appendix A

Readers that Include Creative Nonfiction and Essays on the Art of Writing

- *Creating Nonfiction*, Becky Bradway and Doug Hesse

This book combines a guide to reading and writing nonfiction with an anthology representing various subgenres of creative nonfiction, including critiques and reviews, literary journalism, traditional and graphic memoirs, and others. The anthology includes a diverse group of both canonical and emerging writers, and its editors strive to include essays not published in other creative nonfiction textbooks.

- *Creative Nonfiction*, edited by Lee Gutkind
  This quarterly literary magazine is dedicated to the genre of creative nonfiction. It features prominent authors from the United States and around the world, and it is often organized around controversial themes, such as sin, anger and revenge, and true crime. This journal is a good source for both professional essay models and academic articles on the creative nonfiction craft.

- *The Fourth Genre*, Robert Root and Michael Steinberg
  This reader is divided into three useful sections: Writing Creative Nonfiction, Talking about Creative Nonfiction, and Composing Creative Nonfiction. The current sixth edition includes examples and discussion of traditional forms of creative nonfiction, such as memoir, personal essay, and cultural criticism, in addition to alternative forms of the genre including the lyric essay, the visual essay, blogs, and graphic memoirs. We have used this book as a course text for several years.

Anthologies

- *Literary Journalism*, edited by Norman Sims
  A collection of fifteen essays written by literary

journalists, this book is an excellent source of models for everything from personal essays to profiles to science, nature, and travel writing.

- *Best American Essays*; annual October publication, Robert Atwan, series editor
An annual series since 1986, this collection is edited each year by a different writer whose choices lend a unique flavor or theme to the edition. The two dozen or so selections are from sources as diverse as *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *The Atlantic*, and *Mother Jones* and serve as excellent examples of the subgenres of creative nonfiction.

- *IN FACT: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*, edited by Lee Gutkind
A collection of twenty-five essays originally published in the journal *Creative Nonfiction*, founded and still edited by Lee Gutkind, this is a good source for essays representative of creative nonfiction's various forms.

Teaching Creative Nonfiction

- *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White
This classic style manual conveys the principles of English style in an easy-to-read, user-friendly format. A must-have resource for every writer.

- *Keep It Real*, Lee Gutkind
This succinct reference guide seeks to clarify the parameters of creative nonfiction, helping writers to embrace the flexibility of the genre while remaining truthful, factual, and artful. Topics include acknowledgement of sources, fact-checking, composite characters, family members as characters, immersion, and many others.

- *The Nonfictionist's Guide*, Robert Root
  This guide to reading and writing nonfiction divides each main chapter into two "braided strands." One strand focuses on looking at elements of nonfiction that help readers appreciate the aesthetic elements of the genre; the other strand offers suggestions and recommendations about writing nonfiction. Topics include the use of experimental forms, experiential and reflective voices, the issue of truth, and the segmented essay.

- *On Writing Well*, William Zinsser
  This book offers principles and insights on writing about people, places, science and technology, the arts, sports, and others. The author also deals with issues such as clutter, style, the audience, and usage. A compliment to *Elements of Style*, this book looks at *how* to apply many of the principles that Strunk and White address.

- *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Lee Gutkind
  Lee Gutkind's most recent guide to writing creative nonfiction, this book is divided into two parts: defining creative nonfiction and writing creative nonfiction. The book is anchored by a series of eighteen exercises that guide readers through writing one example of each kind of creative nonfiction—memoir/personal essay and immersion nonfiction. An instructor's guide for the book is available on Gutkind's website.

- *Writing Life Stories*, Bill Roorbach
  This book contains both instruction and useful exercises to help writers turn their life stories and experiences into personal essays and memoirs. Roorbach

provides writers with the tools to access memory and emotions, shape scenes from experience, develop characters, and research supporting details.

Appendix B

THE PERSONAL ESSAY: "TO TRY, TO ATTEMPT"
Expository Writing • Friebel • Quarter Two

Essays "are experiments in making sense of things." —Scott Russell Sanders, *The Paradise of Bombs* (quoted in Heilker 89)

"Rarely does the…essay set out hiking boots afoot and compass in hand; instead it meanders…. Instead of driving hard to prove a point, the essay saunters, letting the writer follow the vagaries of his own willful curiosity. Instead of reaching conclusions, the essay ruminates and wonders. Rather than being right or informative, it is thoughtful." —Samuel F. Pickering Jr. (quoted in Heilker 91)

Working in the essay form "allows you to ramble in a way that reflects the mind at work…. [I]n an essay, the track of a person's thoughts struggling to achieve some understanding of a problem *is* the plot, is the adventure. The essayist must be willing to contradict himself…to digress, and even to end up in an opposite place from where he started…. The essay offers the chance to wrestle with one's own intellectual confusion." —Phillip Lopate (quoted in Heilker 93)

An overview of the essay: You will write an essay—that is either serious or humorous (or both) in nature—on a topic of your choice. Just make sure the topic is personal. As my best writing professor at The University of Michigan, John Rubadeau, used to say, "Make the private public." You will

be the authority on your essay because your life is unique, and you will be writing about it. Certainly, you *can choose* to incorporate a *limited* amount of research into your essay, but, from a general standpoint, no one else has experienced life as you have. This essay should reflect a conflict or dilemma in your own life—one you have no obvious answer to, one you have not completely figured out.

Format and Length: Using 12-point Times, one-inch margins, and double-spacing, you should develop an essay that is **no longer than 3.5 pages** and **no shorter than 3 pages**. All writing past 3.5 pages will not be graded, so your essay should be developed by then. Also, make sure to include a captivating title at the top center of the page.

Examples: In previous classes I've taught, these were some essay topics: fitting in at HC; the thoughts of moving on to college and leaving people behind; trying to merge my family's Hispanic culture with U.S. ideals; September 11, 2001; not forgetting my dad—despite what has changed since he was here; skipping a grade academically but not emotionally; coping with my broken family; fighting depression; having too much of an obsession with football; the death of my sister; growing up in a religious household and deciding if that's what I want in my future; why I might not be able to make a living as a fashion model; why my imaginary friend may have left; why I'd like to meet my grandmother whom we don't speak to; my fear of marriage; getting over my first crush; growing up and dealing with my friends' change; the relationship I *had* and *have* with my oldest brother; contemplating why I could never tell my mom how I felt when I learned she had breast cancer; and my rationale for running track—a sport I hate.

Disclaimer: While I encourage you to write about a topic that is personal in nature, I do need to make you aware of one of my responsibilities. Please be advised that if you write about anything that implies that you could be harming yourself or others, I am required by law to inform the Department of Child and Family Services, a school social worker, or another school authority.

Grading of the essay: The essay will be graded twice: the first grade will reflect the quality of your first draft and will be worth 25% of your Quarter Two grade; the second grade will reflect the quality of your rewrite and will serve as 50% of your final exam grade for this course. **All essays must be turned in by or during Period 2 on the day they are due; those that don't will receive failing grades—even if you are excused from school on that day.** When you hand in your essay, please turn in 25 copies. If you want me to make the copies for you, I will need the essay the day before it is officially due. If you turn in your essay on the day that it is officially due and you do not have 25 copies, I will deduct one letter grade from the letter grade you earn (i.e. if you earned a *B–* but turned in an insufficient number of copies of your essay on the official due date, you would be assigned a *C–*). Do be advised that you will not be allowed to print out 25 copies from either the library or any of the computer labs here at school. Make sure to work around that restriction.

I will especially focus on learning goals one, two, and five. I will also closely evaluate your ability to thoughtfully and clearly develop the complexities that lie within the personal dilemma you've focused on as you inject your personal voice, too.

Functional plans: You will notice that before your essay is due, you will have one checkpoint when we discuss your

essay's functional plan. For this, you need to complete one well-developed paragraph that provides me with a synopsis of your planned essay. Basically, I'd like to know what your topic is, how it will allow you to essay, and what areas (involved people, supporting subplots, specific dilemmas, explanations) you will develop as you write. **This will be a homework assignment and must be turned in on time.**

Critiques: These will be worth **30% of your Quarter Two grade**. You will be responsible for completing a critique for every student essay in this class. The typed critique of at least one page needs to be submitted on the day we discuss that particular essay. See format requirements below in "Extra Credit." **No late critiques will receive credit.** If you are not here on any given day, e-mail me the critique(s).

Extra credit: I will keep a running tally of the number of typed critique pages you submit. To qualify, **your typed critiques must be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font, and you must use margins no larger than 1.25 inches**. Typed critiques not using this spacing, this font, or these margins will not be entered into the tally. **Also, to qualify, all critiques must be turned in and on time.** At the end of the quarter, I will raise the final second quarter grade of the person who submits the most typed pages of critiques by 7% (i.e. a person who is earning an 88% would end up with a 95%). In addition, I will raise the final second quarter grade of the person who submits the second most typed pages of critiques by 3.5% (i.e. a person who is earning an 88% would end up with a 91.5%). On one other note, I will only award these percentages to the top two students if obvious efforts have been made. To demonstrate an obvious effort, a student would need to average at least 1.7 pages per critique.

The Calendar

Wednesday, November 14
>   Discuss functional plans for student essays 1–4

Monday, November 19
>   **Due:** Student essays 1–4 (with 25 copies)

Tuesday, November 20
>   Discuss functional plans for student essays 5–9

Monday, November 26
>   Discuss student essays 1 and 2*

Wednesday, November 28
>   Discuss student essays 3 and 4*

Thursday, November 29
>   **Due:** Student essays 5–9 (with 25 copies)

Friday, November 30
>   Discuss functional plans for student essays 10–14

Monday, December 3
>   Discuss student essays 5 and 6*

Tuesday, December 4
>   Discuss student essay 7*

Wednesday, December 5
>   Discuss student essay 8*

Thursday, December 6
>   **Due:** Student essays 10–14 (with 25 copies)

Friday, December 7
>   Discuss student essay 9*
>   Discuss functional plans for student essays 15–18

Monday, December 10
>   Discuss student essays 10 and 11*

Wednesday, December 12
>   Discuss student essays 12 and 13*

Thursday, December 13
>   **Due:** Student essays 15–18 (with 25 copies)

Friday, December 14
>   Discuss student essay 14*
>   Discuss functional plans for student essays 19–22

Monday, December 17
>   Discuss student essays 15 and 16*

Tuesday, December 18
>   **Due:** Student essays 19–22 (with 25 copies)

Wednesday, December 19
>   Discuss student essays 17 and 18*

Tuesday, January 8
>   Discuss student essays 19 and 20*

Thursday, January 10
>   Discuss student essays 21 and 22*

Wednesday, January 16

>   **All (student essays 1–22) final drafts—stapled to the initial drafts—are due at the beginning of Period 2. No exceptions.**

*Each student must submit his or her typed critique (minimum of one page) of the student essay(s) under discussion on that particular day. **No late critiques accepted for credit.**

Appendix C

CULTURAL CRITICISM THROUGH LITERATURE
AP Lit and Comp • Burrell • Quarter Two

The assignment: We have been studying the works *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and considering the larger social issues that such

works expose. We will also read essays such as "Rude am I in My Speech" by Caryl Phillips (*BAE 2011*) and "The Foul Reign of 'Self-Reliance'" by Benjamin Anastas (*BAE 2012*) which shed light on contemporary society through a deeper understanding of literature. For this assignment, you will have the opportunity to examine an aspect of contemporary society that runs a parallel course to or becomes a hybrid of the society presented in either *Heart of Darkness* and / or *The Great Gatsby*.

Skills to be assessed: a sense of exigence and purpose; a sophisticated incorporation of a thematic element or social issue from at least one of the texts, which represents an intimate knowledge of the text(s) under discussion; logical construction of central idea (logos); appropriate and clear development of voice (ethos); well-considered and effectively built emotional response of audience (pathos); the appropriate use of diction and syntax; a purposeful arrangement; the consideration of other argument(s)/perspective(s); the ability to expand the subject into a greater social context; the purposeful use of research; correct use of informal citations.

The inclusion of research: You need to include at least two sources, outside of the work(s) of literature. You may have more. Scrutinize which sources you use. Remember that you are using outside information to help you develop and argue a point. Your choices of research reflect on many features of your writing—not just on your ethos. As the writers of *Creating Nonfiction* point out, "Writers live not only in their heads but also in the world around them. No writer's direct experience can comprise more than a tiny fraction of that world. They examine, explain, dissect, and try to comprehend by reading and researching…. [R]esearch can bring not only credibility but also creative energy. It can impel writing as well as enhance it."

Be purposeful. As you incorporate your research, use informal citations. See the sample essays for examples. After the final line in your personal cultural criticism, include a bibliography of all sources you have referenced.

Length and format: The literary cultural criticism should be a minimum of three pages in length. Please use 12-point Times, one-inch margins, black ink, and double-spacing. Include a meaningful title at the top center of the first page and page numbers at the bottom center of every page. Submit your reader's draft to your group for workshopping and your final draft to turnitin.com by 3:00 p.m. on the due date to avoid late penalties.

Some advice from writers to keep in mind…

"[W]hen critics want to be read, and especially when they want to be read by a large audience, they have to court their readers. And the courtship begins when the critic begins to think of himself or herself as a writer as well, a process that for me, as for some other critics of my generation, means writing as a person with feelings, histories, and desires—as well as information and knowledge. When writers want to be read they have to be more flexible and take more chances than the standard scholarly style allows: often, they have to be more direct and more personal." —Marianna Torgovnick from "Experimental Critical Writing"

"When able to work in a creative nonfiction mode, critics and debaters have plenty of room to develop a subject, give context and depth, use associative and aesthetic strategies rather than formulae." —Becky Bradway and Doug Hesse from *Creating Nonfiction*

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A DIALOGIC PATH TO THE COMMON CORE

ELIZABETH KAHN, CAROLYN WALTER,
AND THOMAS M. MCCANN

Timothy Shanahan, both a proponent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and a vocal critic of many practices followed in the name of the CCSS, has discouraged certain types of prereading activities and has called for a rethinking of practices intended to prepare learners for reading complex texts ("The Common Core Ate My Baby and Other Urban Legends"; "Letting the Text Take Center Stage"). Shanahan acknowledges that "there simply is no ban on prereading in the Common Core State Standards" ("Common Core"). At the same time, Shanahan cautions against "overpreparing" learners: "Too often, teachers assume that their students lack appropriate background knowledge to make sense of a text; and too often, their notion of how to address such gaps has been to tell students what the text is going to say" ("Common Core" 11). He encourages close reading, which requires

rereading. In Gallagher's language, this would mean a "draft reading" of a text and then a second and maybe a third reading. But Shanahan acknowledges that some prereading is appropriate: "Some texts may require providing students with a context to minimize interpretive problems; with other texts, it might make more sense to *not* provide background but to carefully observe as students confront the information, querying them about the potentially confusing stuff and adding any necessary explanation before a second reading" ("Common Core" 11).

As long-time proponents of prereading or gateway activities (Smagorinsky, McCann, and Kern; Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter), we see value in appropriate preparation for the close reading of complex texts. We concur with Shanahan, however, that appropriate prereading should find a balance between inviting inquiry that establishes purpose and fosters enthusiasm for reading (Frey and Fisher) and co-opting the experience with literature away from learners, as Shanahan fears ("Letting"). If the adoption of Common Core State Standards introduces students more than ever to complex texts, we continue to see an acute need for well-designed inquiry activities that offer a point of entry into a text, raise critical questions, and involve learners in the interpretation and judgment procedures that mature readers typically practice with challenging texts. We describe here some features of well-designed, inquiry-based prereading activities (and some missteps to avoid), illustrate with a sample activity, and suggest how such an activity helps learners to have a rich literary experience with a complex text.

Echoing the misgivings that Shanahan has voiced about prereading activities, we begin by offering a few warnings. In our judgment, prereading activities should avoid the following:

- Revealing the plot and spoil the experience or effect;

- Narrowing critical judgment to focus on one aphoristic statement of theme;

- Allowing learners to actually avoid reading the text;

- Standing alone, with no apparent connection to other learning.

We can think of occasions when a teacher, in the effort to help students process a difficult text, has delivered an overview of most of the plot of a narrative, to the point where the students only needed to turn their attention to the end to learn how conflicts were resolved and to earn a passing grade on a test that focused on recall of plot points. Under such circumstances, it is hardly fair to say that students have actually *read* the text. Equally disconcerting is a prereading activity that implies a teacher's insistence that students come away from a text with a distilled sense of theme—that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about *injustice* and *Romeo and Juliet* is about *bigotry* and *hatred*. Of course, prereading activities do not even serve these dubious purposes when they are not explicitly connected to a single text or to a body of literature.

On the other hand, well-designed prereading activities—and prewriting activities, for that matter—avoid these pitfalls and promote deeper—not shallower—reading of texts. We offer below an example of a type of prereading activity that we have found effective—not as a crutch to avoid close reading, but as a means to foster deeper understanding of challenging texts. The activity is both inquiry-based and dialogic, requiring students to interact as part of a process of constructing a critical framework that they can apply to their subsequent close reading.

Figure 1

Truth and Lies: Is It Always Right to Tell the Truth?

*Read each of the following scenarios and answer the questions. Your answers will serve as possible guidelines for judging the necessity to tell the truth always. Be sure to cite examples as evidence, and explain your evidence in its connection to your judgments. Share your responses with two or three classmates and attempt to arrive at some agreement. After discussing all of the scenarios, determine guidelines for when, if ever, it is appropriate **not** to tell the truth.*

When a tornado warning siren sounds, Mrs. Safer hurriedly sends her children to the basement. As they all huddle in a corner under the stairs, her five-year-old becomes frightened and starts crying. Mrs. Safer tells her that nothing bad will happen and that they will all be safe from any danger. Is Mrs. Safer lying to her child? Is she telling the truth? Is she right in the way she handles the situation? Why or why not?

The Handovers want their nine-year-old son to attend a selective-admissions prep school. He takes the entrance test, and they find out that his scores place him at a lower level than most children his age. The Handovers worry that knowing the test results will have a devastating effect on their son, so even though they think the school is fantastic, they tell him that after visiting the school they have decided that they do not like it. They never reveal the scores to their son. Are these parents guilty of lying? Were they wrong not to tell their son his scores? Why or why not?

Sergeant Mace is fighting a war overseas and discovers that due to an error of judgment a platoon of American soldiers destroyed a village that was full of women and children rather

than enemy soldiers. The army does not want to reveal what has happened. Officials argue that it was an accident and that broadcasting what happened will put innocent soldiers in danger because it would further enrage the enemy and increase the number of attacks on Americans. But Sergeant Mace tells a reporter about the incident because he feels that people deserve to know what is really happening in the war. Is Sergeant Mace doing the right thing? Is it wrong to keep the information from the public? Why or why not?

A middle school American history textbook includes information about President Thomas Jefferson fathering children with one of his slaves, Sally Hemings. The state board of education asked the textbook publisher to remove this information, arguing that it is inappropriate and not relevant to understanding Jefferson's role in American history. The textbook company decides to remove the information. Did they make the right decision? Are they guilty of hiding the truth? Why or why not?

Sheila Salvador works for an agency that raises money to help victims of cancer and their families. She is by far the agency's best fundraiser. A coworker discovers that in the past Sheila was in prison for ten years for armed robbery. The coworker tells the boss that he believes everyone should be told the truth about Sheila. The boss says that Sheila has paid the price for her actions, but that others in the agency would most likely call for her dismissal, so the information should not be revealed. Is the boss right in keeping this information from others? Why or why not?

Tina Vallejo was brought to the United States from Vietnam by her parents when she was four years old. She did not find out that she was an undocumented immigrant until she was

sixteen. She was shocked and frightened that if the authorities found out she would be deported to a country she did not know and have to leave all her family and friends. Tina was an honor student throughout school and graduated from a prestigious university. She found a job as an aerospace engineer. She worked to keep her status hidden from all but a few trusted teachers, administrators, and employers, who kept her secret and helped her because they thought she was an outstanding person. Were Tina's supporters right to keep her undocumented status hidden? Was Tina justified in doing so? Why or why not?

Marcel Laggard was not very popular with kids his age. He mostly sat around the house when he was not in school. After he heard some athletes talking about running a marathon, he began to tell other kids that he was training for a marathon. The other kids took notice and seemed to pay more attention to Marcel. He continued to talk about training for a marathon; however, he actually did nothing except continue to sit around the house. After several weeks, some boys asked him what marathon he was planning to enter and when. Marcel stumbled and could not answer them, slinking away in complete embarrassment. That night while surfing the web, he saw a website with specific instructions about how to train for a marathon. He decided to go to the high school track on the weekend and try "Step One." After running a few laps, he encountered a group of four students who were training for a marathon. They invited Marcel to join their training group, and he agreed. Marcel stuck with the training and eventually successfully completed a marathon. Is Marcel guilty of lying? Are his actions and behavior acceptable? Why or why not?

This scenario activity serves as a "gateway" (Hillocks) for a conceptual inquiry unit focusing on literature that raises questions about issues of truth-telling and lies—whether it is always right to tell the truth. For example, such a unit might involve a major work such as *To Kill a Mockingbird,* which raises questions such as how much truth should be told to young children, whether Atticus is justified or hypocritical in deciding to cover up the truth about the killing of Bob Ewell, whether the high value that Atticus places on truth is too idealistic and impractical or unsustainable, what Harper Lee's viewpoint is of Atticus's decisions, and so forth. This unit might begin with short poems such as "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant" (Emily Dickinson) and "Lies" (Yevgeny Yevtushenko) and short stories such as "A Summer's Reading" (Bernard Malamud) and "The Lie" (Kurt Vonnegut), moving student from relatively simple texts to works of greater and greater complexity.

How does a prereading activity such as this work? The following is an excerpt of a sample dialogue as students discuss the scenarios in small groups in preparation for a whole class discussion. The discussion focuses on the fourth scenario in Figure 1.

Andre: I don't think it [information about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings] belongs in a history textbook.

Sara: Right, I agree. It should be about how he [Jefferson] was president and the Declaration of Independence; that's history.

Mateo: I don't see why not to put it in. If it's true, then it's history, isn't it?

Isabell: I agree, but I think that middle school is too young. High school or college is okay.

Mateo: How is middle school too young? They know about
          stuff like this, probably even in fourth or fifth grade.

Andre: But for young kids, it could make them think our country
          is bad. They wouldn't have respect for it. That wouldn't
          be good. Older kids wouldn't think that.

Isabell: But if it's true, why shouldn't they know something
          bad about someone who is supposed to be a hero of our
          country? Didn't he sign the Constitution or Declaration
          of Independence? Independence, not slavery. Should
          we just let them think that he is so great?…[discussion
          continues]

As students discuss the scenarios, they work on developing a set of criteria for when, if ever, it is right not to tell the truth. Students typically spend a class period or more discussing their viewpoints about the scenarios in small groups, and then another class period or more in whole class discussion as they present and challenge various viewpoints. As teachers, we facilitate the exchange of ideas and sometimes, as needed, encourage critical thinking by posing questions to keep the discussion moving productively (Who should determine what information is appropriate in a history textbook? Is there anything wrong with simply not including some information since everything can't be included or textbooks would be multiple volumes?). We also encourage students to support, clarify, and elaborate on their ideas.

We have found that if instead of using the set of scenarios we begin a discussion by asking students the question, "Is it always right to tell the truth?" in most cases the outcome is a brief discussion that does not engage students in the depth of thinking that results from examining the scenarios. Students seem to respond more readily when they recognize a specific resonant problem. The scenarios (or case studies

or examples from the news) represent specific problems, not just abstract questions.

After a few days engaged in a discussion of these complex scenarios concerning whether telling the truth is the right thing to do, we have students examine literary works in order to focus on what others beyond their classmates think about this issue. For example, next we have them look at two poems: "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant" by Emily Dickinson and "Lies" by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. We ask students what Dickinson and Yevtushenko think about the question of whether it is always right to tell the truth. How are their ideas similar or different? As they analyze these poems, they do so from the context of having thought deeply about the issue of whether it is always right to tell the truth; hence, they are well equipped to enter an ongoing academic conversation.

So how does this kind of prereading activity affect students' reading of texts? Are students cued to what is in the poems to the extent that they do not really need to read them? We don't think so, because it is not sufficient for students simply to say that the poems are "about truth and lies." Students do much more. They focus on what Dickinson means by telling the truth "slant" and why truth should be told "slant." They discuss how Dickinson and Yevtushenko ("Lying to the young is wrong. / Proving to them that lies are true is wrong") would each respond to the scenario involving Thomas Jefferson or other scenarios. As students explore these issues, they return to the poems to reread and to find evidence for their ideas.

Another important effect of the prereading activity is that it helps students generate key questions themselves to ask in discussing the poems (or other texts), but it hardly means that they don't have to struggle in interpreting them. In one small group, students noticed, for example, that Dickinson

characterizes the whole truth as frightening and dangerous through the use of words such as "lightning" and "blind." They debated whether she is saying that people can't handle truth or that truth is bad. One small group ultimately argued that she would want to include the information about Sally Hemings in the textbook since she says "tell all the truth," but she would somehow introduce it "gradually" or maybe not until high school rather than in middle school.

The discussion of the scenarios tends to give students a motivation or enthusiasm to find out what other texts and writers have to say about the key questions that they have been discussing. Without this context, unfortunately, many would approach a text with the attitude "Who cares what it's about?" Actually, this prereading activity involves a great deal of reading. Students analyze seven situations designed to promote critical thinking by making abstract concepts and issues accessible and concrete.

Certainly there are situations in which students need to be able to read and comprehend a text "cold" without knowing the context or having a teacher to guide them. And it makes sense for teachers to spend some time helping students develop strategies for doing so. However, having cold reading as the primary approach on an ongoing basis can easily result in instruction that is fragmented, disconnected, and artificial. Such reading can suggest that the purpose of reading is to practice reading rather than to join an ongoing academic conversation among readers and writers. If, as Graff argues, literature generates ongoing conversations and arguments about important cultural and philosophical questions, engaging students in the controversies and arguments provides a context for reading that encourages greater interest and deeper thinking.

So what are the features of well-designed prereading activities that avoid the pitfalls and shortcomings that Shana-

han argues "overprepare" students? We support the strategic use of prereading activities, and we judge that well-designed activities have the following features:

They derive from a careful task analysis by:

- knowing who the learners are;
- recognizing the challenges the specific group of learners might have with a text;
- recognizing the broader instructional goals and connections between the specific text and the goals.

They motivate students to want to read by:

- giving students confidence that they can actually read the text by:
  - o preparing students to recognize and / or figure out vocabulary,
  - o preparing learners for new syntax, structure, allusions, and historical and literacy references;
- representing the reading as a valued shared experience;
- exposing conflicting views about the text: how to interpret it and how to value it.

They provide a point of entry into a challenging text by:

- representing a starting point for an experience with a text;
- encouraging other possibilities for experiencing and responding to a text.

They raise critical questions as possible foci and points of inquiry for the reading by:

- honoring the critical tradition that surrounds the text;

- representing the inquiry as areas of doubt rather than consensus understandings;

- positioning the inquiry into a specific text as part of a larger shared inquiry.

They equip learners with a critical framework for judging characters and the text as a whole by:

- facilitating the expression of criteria or standards that become the basis for judgments (e.g., Is this a tragedy? Is the character justified? Can we consider the character a hero?).

They engage learners in making critical judgments and in expressing related arguments by:

- involving the collision of adverse positions;

- promoting the civil and rational expression of critical judgments;

- exposing learners to a variety of perspectives and arguments;

- testing students' thinking against opposition;

- drawing from the distributed knowledge of a group.

They encourage reflection about how one arrives at a critical judgment by:

- fostering an awareness of inferencing and critical judgment processes that, with practice, have a reasonable potential to transfer to the work with a text;

- fostering empathic responses to characters.

They allow for some discussion to be student-led, giving students a good deal of autonomy about who will lead, how to proceed, how to report, how to record, etc.

Shanahan ("Letting") argues that the Common Core State Standards will help get educators "to move ideas, and thinking about ideas, back to the center of the reading curriculum" ("Letting" 11). Instead of inhibiting this effort, well-designed prereading activities play a significant role in creating a classroom environment in which students engage with each other in thinking and talking about ideas and texts.

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"TREASURES IN THE ATTIC":
INCORPORATING HISTORICAL
DOCUMENTS AND ARTWORK WITH CCSS

KRISTIN RUNYON

While attending my first professional development introducing the Common Core State Standards in the fall of 2011, I panicked. I think that was many teachers' reaction. Yes, I teach many of those skills, but do I emphasize them? Do I hold my students to rigorous standards? And, the standard that became the focus of my tunnel vision, where will I find all those multiple presentations and different artistic representations of the same topic and theme? Maybe not every ELA teacher focused on Reading Standard 7, but I did. In fact, I think that I only reported that standard to my department because it was the one standard that I knew I was currently teaching with any emphasis. Two years later, I realize that Standard 7, with the artistic representations in grades 9–10 and the multiple interpretations in grade 11–12, is one small

part of the Common Core State Standards, but one that ELA teachers, nonetheless, need to address.

My aha! moment came as I planned for the 2012 winter / spring semester. Although I had Googled numerous search terms related to artwork, primary sources, and every theme and topic that I teach, I was struggling to connect the search results to the texts. As I leafed through the textbooks, the cartoon light bulb illuminated and I realized that the kind editors of both the Holt, Rinehart and Winston and Prentice Hall literature series had already included artwork with almost every text. Not only is the artwork present, but the same kind editors included background information about the artwork and artist, plus questions and suggested answers about the pairing of the artwork with that particular text, as well as the artistic techniques utilized and how they reflect the text. The first time that I presented "Treasures in the Attic," I had an art teacher in the audience who wanted to know what qualified me to interpret artistic technique. Not much; I haven't had an art class since elementary school, but at least the editors have given me something to think about and possibly use. If I don't understand the editors' suggested answers or don't agree with them, then I don't use those questions.

But while the textbooks do include artwork, and that artwork is well paired in the sophomore and junior textbooks that my school district uses, the freshmen textbook artwork pairing is not always as carefully connected, and it confuses my students because the artwork conflicts with the text. Obviously, I needed other resources.

Art museums have wonderful online resources. The Art Institute of Chicago even has teaching resources for a variety of subjects paired with artwork. The Art Institute also has the Crown Family Educator Resource Center; any teacher who visits the Art Institute, after receiving his / her free one-year

admission pass (just bring proof that you are a teacher in Illinois), may visit the resource center, check out materials, and print the artwork that is available online (a benefit for those who may have limited color printing at their schools). The Art Institute also offers workshops for teachers throughout the school year.

While artwork is stated in the standards, connecting song lyrics to texts has become a popular writing assignment in recent years and can meet Standard 9 for grades 9–10 to analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material or Standard 7 for grades 11–12 to analyze multiple interpretations. A particularly useful resource is the LitTunes Connections database created by Dr. Christian Z. Goering of the University of Arkansas. Although the database has not been updated since 2008, Dr. Goering paired songs with texts frequently taught in secondary schools and included some songs that the songwriters identified as having been inspired by a text.

The final resource that I would like to share is the Library of Congress and its Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Consortium members. The ELA standards include seminal and foundational U.S. texts and the literacy standards for history / social studies include primary sources. Again, finding these texts may seem daunting when a teacher encounters the standards for the first or second time. But, like the artwork, the resources are readily available, as long as a teacher is willing to put in the time to search through the resources. The Library of Congress has digitized many of the items in its collection. These include photographs, works of art, sheet music, newspaper articles, political cartoons, letters, maps, and interviews. Searching the collection will provide any teacher with an overwhelming number of results, so the Library has created a variety of resources specifically for teachers. Within

the classroom materials, both the "Primary Source Sets" and "Themed Resources" provide educators with a variety of primary sources grouped into mini-collections.

How should you use these resources to meet the standards? Dr. Goering, on his LitTunes webpage, suggests analyzing the paired texts and songs for six distinct types of connections: 1) a song that is inspired by literature directly; 2) a song that connects to a text thematically; 3) a song's setting that connects to the setting of a literary work; 4) characters in a song that mirror the characters in a classic work; 5) the tone of a song is similar to the tone of a piece of literature; and 6) a song's plot structure or narrative follows that of a literary work. In addition to these six pairings, I would also add having students analyze if a work is appropriately paired with a text; for example, as mentioned earlier, some of the artwork included in the literature anthologies confuse my students more than help.

I would suggest that Dr. Goering's six connections may be applied to any textual or artistic medium extension. Any activity does not need to, and probably should not, incorporate all six connections. In addition, when planning teachers should consider the following: 1) the teacher may choose both the extension and the connection; 2) the teacher may choose the extension, but allow the students to choose the connection; 3) the teacher may choose the connection, but allow the students to find an extension; and 4) the students may choose both the extension and the connection.

Finally, but most importantly, the best advice that I have ever received as a teacher is to know that I do not have to incorporate changes into every lesson plan by the start of the next unit, semester, or school year. While these new standards are required, teachers need to take baby steps to incorporate these treasures into their lesson plans and units.

Appendix: Additional Resources for Teachers

Artistic Media:

- LitTunes Connections database (www.corndancer.com/tunes/tunes_cncts.html)

    o Created by Dr. Christian Goering of the Univeristy of Arkansas

    o Songs paired with frequently taught texts, including songs identified by the songwriters as having been inspired by that text

    o Has not been updated since 2008

- Classical Comics (classicalcomics.com) graphic novels for the classroom

    o Original, Plain, and Quick text levels for "mixed abilities," using same illustrations and page numbers (mostly for Shakespearean plays)

- Library of Congress (www.loc.gov or www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials)

    o Lesson Plans, Themed Resources, Primary Source Sets, Presentations and Activities, Collection Connection

- Art Museums online

    o Museum of Modern Art—Teacher resources as PDF downloads (www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning) and online collections (www.moma.org/explore)

    o Art Institute of Chicago—Artwork Resource Packets as PDF downloads (www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder), also teaching activities have IL Learning Standards (not CCR)

  o National Gallery of Art—Online interactive lesson units; for example, Heroes & Heroines with five works of art (www.nga.gov/education/classroom)

  o Smithsonian American Art Museum—Content Links for online exhibitions and Teacher Guides with artwork and activities; for example, "Telling Stories: Norman Rockwell," which includes activities for various subjects PLUS a list of primary sources to pair with the artwork (americanart.si.edu/education/resources/)

- Political Cartoons

  o Daryl Cagle's Political Cartoonists Index (www.cagle.com)

  o Cartoons for the Classroom (nieonline.com/aaec/cftc.cfm)

  o "It's No Laughing Matter": Analyzing Political Cartoons (www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/political-cartoon/index.html)

- Fine Art Resources provided by literature series

  o Artwork provided in textbook; teachers' guides usually include some additional background information plus questions to discuss.

  o Transparencies provided in teacher resources; some accompany literature, some just practice analyzing artwork

  o Can purchase online at reduced costs (www.amazon.com, www.alibris.com)

Seminal and Foundational U.S. Documents:

> "Teaching with Primary Sources"—resources and lessons created for teachers, as well as analysis tools for various types of primary source documents (www.eiu.edu/~eiutps/)

- Library of Congress—"Primary Source Sets" (www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials)

- National Archives Teacher Resources (www.archives.gov/education)

  - o *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives* (www.ourdocuments.gov)
  - o Docs Teach: The National Archives Experience, categorized by National History Standards and includes 1754–1820s (Revolution); 1801–1861 (Expansion); 1850–1877 (Civil War and Reconstruction); 1870–1900 (Industrialization); 1890–1930 (Modern America); 1929–1945 (Great Depression and WWII); 1945–early 1970s (Postwar); 1968–present (Contemporary) (docsteach.org)

- Dover Publications (www.doverpublications.com)

  - o *Famous Documents and Speeches of the Civil War*
  - o *Great Speeches* series: Abraham Lincoln, African Americans, American Women, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, The 20th Century
  - o *The Declaration of Independence and Other Great Documents of American History: 1775–1865*

Informational texts

- *The Learning Network: Teaching and Learning with the* New York Times

    o Lesson Plans and Activities (learning.blogs. nytimes.com/2013/09/03/14-ways-to-use- the-learning-network-this-school-year)
    o About the Learning Network (learning.blogs. nytimes.com/about-the-learning-network)

Suggestions for Pairings:

Common Core Curriculum Maps in English Language Arts:

- Available for Grades K–5, Grades 6–8, and Grades 9–12

- Published by Jossey-Bass, an imprint of Wiley (www. josseybass.com)

Movies:

- The Story of Movies (www.storyofmovies.org)—Lessons on film analysis for movies such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)

- Brigham Young University's Media Education Database (medb.byu.edu)

- SimplyScripts (www.simplyscripts.com)

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar play:

- *Who Killed Julius Caesar?* (Discovery Channel DVD) "In the first ever application of modern science to the murder of Julius Caesar, this one-hour special uses the latest Crime Scene Investigation techniques, computer reconstruction technology, and experts such as Luciano Garofano of the Italian Carabinieri and criminal profiler Dr. Harold Bursztajn of Harvard

> Medical school, to reveal a shocking new assessment of the truth behind ancient history's most famous assassination."

- Plutarch background about Julius Caesar (translated by Rex Warner)—use as nonfiction reading and then teach only speeches from play

A Raisin in the Sun films:

- Three movie versions—1961, starring the Broadway cast, including Sidney Poitier; 1989, by *American Playhouse*, starring Danny Glover; 2008, starring the Broadway cast, including Sean "P. Diddy" Combs

  o Neither the 1961 nor 2008 version includes the scene discussing Beneatha's haircut
  o The 2008 version added a number of scenes that take place outside the apartment

War and Heroism as portrayed in American literature:

- Pair the literary texts in the anthology with Civil War photographs

- Contrast the images of war heroes in recruitment posters with the soldiers' experiences as described in the texts

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A DISCUSSION OF THE
LITERACY LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT
FOR AN ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL, 2012–2013

LISA CASTLEMAN AND JILL UHLMAN

History of Program

In August 2011 our high school principal compiled a group of teachers to form the High School Literacy Leadership Team (LLT). These teachers (Lisa Castleman, Angie Davis, Jill Uhlman, Jarrod Rackauskas, and Charmaine Ringer) along with the principal attended extensive professional development provided by the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) centered on implementing a coaching / mentoring program. As a result of this training, the LLT decided that the first step necessary was to build relationships between coaches and their teachers. The first semester of the 2011–2012 school year was spent with coaches dropping into teachers' classrooms and beginning general conversations about literacy. During the second semester of the 2011–2012 school year, the LLT

with the help of CEC consultant Lilly Yow developed a focus for the literacy program at the high school. The literacy goals were to focus on note-taking and study strategies, language richness, critical thinking, engagement and discussion, and writing. During the 2011–2012 school year, LLT members used the existing Personalized Learning Center (PLC) framework to disseminate literacy goals and strategies to teachers. LLT members also began to implement informal drop-in visits, formal observations, and one-on-one coaching sessions with teachers.

As the team moved forward into the 2012–2013 school year, there were some changes made to the program. The team moved from five literacy coaches to four when teachers expressed a strong desire to preserve PLC time for departmental issues. We provided professional development for teachers during institute days and teachers' workshops (the Academy) in both the fall and spring semesters. Professional development continued to center around effective instructional and literacy strategies connected to the overarching literacy goals for the high school created by the LLT. As the team moved into the 2012–2013 school year, they also developed a strategic plan to implement formal observations and informal drop-in visits.

Time Spent Coaching

During the 2012–2013 school year, our coaching included formal observations and informal drop-in visits. Drop-in visits were prearranged with nonmentee teachers, but coaches simply dropped into a mentee's classroom and observed for 10–20 minutes. The coach then left an informal note of thanks as well as some brief, informal comments and observations. During the formal observation process, coaches asked mentees to provide specific goals for the observation or a point of focus. The coach then observed the mentee's classroom

for 30–45 minutes during a specific literacy-focused lesson. Finally, the coach and mentee sat down for a conference after the observation to discuss the coach's observations and data collection and to talk about success toward the lesson's goals.

Professional Development for Teachers

During the 2012–2013 school year, teachers were asked to attend training focused on specific literacy strategies that were to be incorporated into the classrooms. The strategies were centered on the five goals of the literacy program and were adaptable in every content area and every grade level.

Literacy Strategies Part One

Literacy Strategies Part One included an introduction to instructional / literacy strategies and discussed the importance of each academic department in the school teaching literacy in each content area. Sessions were held during an August Institute Day (twenty-one teachers attending) and during an Academy Day in October (fourteen teachers attending). The *Illinois State Board of Education, Evaluation For Workshops* asked the following questions, and our teachers answered as shown.

Teachers' Comments / Feedback

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This activity increased my knowledge and skills in my areas of certification, endorsement, or teaching assignment.	10	4	0	0	0
The relevance of this activity to the ISBE teaching standards was clear.	12	2	0	0	0

It was clear that the activity was presented by persons with education and experience in the subject matter.	14	0	0	0	0
The material was presented in an organized, easily understood manner.	14	0	0	0	0
This activity included discussion, critique, or application of what was presented, observed, learned, or demonstrated.	12	2	0	0	0

Teachers' written comments from evaluation form:

- "I appreciate concrete examples of how to apply the concepts."

- "Literacy strategies that apply to many content areas."

- "Good take-away activities."

- "Very enjoyable."

- "I will definitely use the Text Tag and The Top Ten."

- "I liked the specific examples given of how people have used them."

- "Very interesting and helpful presentation."

- "Makes me more comfortable including in daily class activities."

- "I like the Text Tag concept and I think that I will use this when we are learning the historical background for novels in reading class."

Literacy Strategies Part Two

Literacy Strategies Part Two included additional in-structional/literacy strategies and information on creating literacy-enhanced classroom environments and authentic writing. The sessions were held on a January Institute Day (nineteen teachers attending) and an October Academy Day (seventeen teachers attending). The same state evaluation document was used.

Teachers' Comments/Feedback

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This activity increased my knowledge and skills in my areas of certifica-tion, endorsement, or teaching assignment.	14	3	0	0	0
The relevance of this activity to the ISBE teaching standards was clear.	15	2	0	0	0
It was clear that the ac-tivity was presented by persons with education and experience in the subject matter.	16	1	0	0	0

The material was presented in an organized, easily understood manner.	17	0	0	0	0
This activity included discussion, critique, or application of what was presented, observed, learned, or demonstrated.	15	2	0	0	0

Teachers' written comments from evaluation form:

- "These activities are really going to help me engage my students and make me a better teacher."

- "Vocabulary boxes are a great idea for all learners and learning types."

- "List, Group, Label is applicable to science, social studies, and other math teachers."

- "I have never really used literacy strategies before and I think this will help my students and make me feel better."

- "Vocabulary boxes are cool."

- "I am really glad I stayed and gained some valuable new tips for teaching literacy skills."

- "Good activities we can use."

- "New strategies that I can usually use."

Teacher Survey
Fall 2012 Survey Results

In the fall of 2012, LLT members created a survey given to teachers during PLC time. This data was collected to develop an understanding of what teachers' impressions were regarding the beginning stages of the literacy program that occurred during the 2011–2012 school year. With this data, the LLT team reflected on what progress was made during the 2011–2012 school year and developed an action plan for the 2012–2013 school year. Data collected is indicative of teachers' reflections of the literacy program from the 2011–2012 school year.

	1–Low	2	3	4	5–High
Was time in Literacy PLC's worthwhile?	0	2	4	5	6
Were the strategies presented effective?	0	1	2	4	8
Did you see personal growth as a teacher?	2	1	4	4	4
Did you see student growth with respect to literacy?	1	1	5	6	1

	More than once a week	Once a week	Monthly	Did not use
How often did you use literary strategies?	6	2	7	0

Teachers' written comments from evaluation form:

- "Sometimes I use strategies multiple times per week and sometimes none."

- "I need to figure out how to incorporate strategies better."

- "[Literacy PLC time] Very beneficial, I always find I learn better if I am asked to 'try out' the knowledge."

- "[Student growth] is more difficult to measure."

- "Growth in student use and acceptance of these strategies increased."

- "This year's structure is more beneficial to me… institute days instead of PLC time."

- "This is the first time I have been introduced to in-depth literacy strategies."

- "August seminar was great."

- "I used more writing in my class and it is difficult to assess if changes were because of literacy or increased writing options."

What are your specific needs for this year (2012–2013)?

- "Review of strategies."

- "An aid to assist with special needs student population."

- "Diverse strategies."

- "Continue to effectively incorporate literacy into the PE curriculum."

- "How to have students buy into the strategies and see their worth."

- "Integrating technology with literacy strategies."

- "Would like more strategies to use with debates and simulations."

- "I am always trying to adopt these strategies to music."

- "I need to implement the literacy strategies more often."

- "To keep learning and trying the different strategies to see what will work best."

- "More strategies, more fun."

- "I am wanting to expand my options for use and wanting to get more authentic writing introduced in my classroom."

Spring 2013 Survey Results

With defined goals and focus for the literacy program, the spring survey was expanded to gain additional insight from teachers—twenty-six surveys were collected.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that the literacy strategies improved student engagement in my classroom.	0	5	3	12	6
I feel the literacy strategies were easy to implement into my classroom.	0	3	1	18	4
I feel that I was well prepared to implement literacy strategies into my classroom.	0	2	1	14	9
I feel that time spent with my literacy coach was worth-while	0	6	2	10	8

I feel the feedback that I received from my literacy coach was worthwhile.	0	7	1	9	9
I feel that the coaching sessions with my literacy coach allowed me to grow professionally.	0	5	3	11	7
I feel that there was student growth in the area of literacy in my classroom this year.	0	3	8	10	5
I feel that OHS is developing a literacy-focused culture.	0	1	2	20	3
I would like to meet with my literacy coach more often next year.	3	11	5	6	0
I would like more professional development regarding literacy/instructional strategies.	0	5	7	12	1
I would like coaching sessions to include a focus on the CCSS.	1	0	4	16	4

I feel like my literacy goals were met for this year.	0	2	6	14	2
I would like professional development on the Danielson framework (the framework for our evaluation tool).	0	0	10	13	2

	More than once a week	Once a week	Monthly	Did not use
How often did you use literary strategies in your classroom?	10	11	5	0

	0–2	3–4	5–6	7–8	9–10	11–12
How many times did your literary coach visit your classroom this year?	7	8	6	2	0	1

Teachers' written comments from evaluation form:

What do you think is the most beneficial aspect of the current literacy program at OHS?

- "There is a lot of school-wide participation in it."

- "Provision of good transportable techniques—straight from the Academy to the classroom."

- "I saw none this year."

- "Forcing us to open up our instruction to new strategies."

- "Giving assignments to use literacy strategies in the classroom, then actually having someone check that."

- "Everyone using the same strategies."

- "Strategies were taught in practical ways that were easy to implement in all subject areas, not just the core classes."

- "Got students more involved in their learning."

- "New ideas."

- "Simple strategies that enhance lessons for everyone."

- "The support system behind the literacy program."

- "We have coaches and time allocated to the program."

- "Being able to use the ideas and suggestions of other staff."

What literacy strategies do you find most engaging and beneficial in your classroom?

- "I use articles related to what we are studying."

- "Reminders to ask higher level questions, not yes or no."

- "Multiple level tasks—compare / contrast, etc."

- "GOGO [Give One, Get One]."

- "Vocab Pictures [Vocabulary Boxes]."

- "KWL [Know, Want to Know, Learned Chart; Knowledge Chart]."

- "Cornell Notes."

- "Exit ticket—Previewing and Predicting."

LLT Planning/Training

Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) Support Sessions with Lilly Yow

Date	Hours
November 27, 2012	3 hours
January 17, 2013	3 hours
February 26, 2013	3 hours
April 9, 2013	3 hours
Total	**12 hours/ 720 minutes**

Literacy Conferences

Title	Date	Hours
Literacy Strategies and the Common Core	October 3, 2012	6 hours
IIRC Literacy Conference	March 14–15, 2013	12 hours
Total		**18 hours/ 1080 minutes**

LLT Planning

Date	Hours
September 21, 2012*	3.5 hours
September 24, 2012	3 hours
September 26, 2012*	2.5 hours
September 28, 2012	3.5 hours
October 15, 2012*	3 hours
November 1, 2012	3.5 hours
November 6, 2012*	1 hour
December 14, 2012	3.5 hours
February 8, 2013	3.5 hours
March 21, 2013	3.5 hours
Total	**21.5 hours/ 1290 minutes**

*Denotes planning time with all members of the LLT

Miscellaneous Literacy Activities

Activity	Date	Hours
Meeting with Laura O'Donnell and Rexie Lanier at Evans Jr. High School (EJHS)	September 18, 2013	3 hours
Meeting with Rexie Lanier at EJHS	April 15, 2013	3 hours
Total		**6 hours/ 360 minutes**

Literacy Goals

Prior to formal literacy observations, teachers were asked to select a goal as the focus of the observation and coaching session. They were asked to select a goal from each of the criterion below and were also given the opportunity to create their own goal centered on the criterion. These goals were created based on a random selection method. We did not receive a goal sheet from every teacher for every observation; the table below indicates the goals collected from twenty-two teachers. Additionally, some teachers did indicate more than one goal in a criterion.

Criterion 1: Creating a Literate Environment	Number of Teacher Responses
1. Student work in response to reading through drawing, writing, or art was displayed on walls in classrooms and in hallways.	6
2. Writing drafts and/or published pieces are displayed on walls in classrooms and in hallways.	3

3. Diverse reading materials are enjoyed, discussed, and analyzed across the curriculum.	2
4. Problem solving is collaborative (pairs or groups), and talk is purposeful.	6
5. Engagement is maintained by meaningfulness and relevance of the task.	7
6. Elaborated discussions around specific concepts are promoted, and students' thinking are valued and discussed.	4
7. Classroom environment is conducive to inquiry-based learning and learners are engaged in constructive interactions around purposeful literacy events.	1
8. Own goal:	6
9. Own goal 2:	1

Teachers were also given the opportunity to set their own goals and provide insight into their goal setting, below is a sample of their thoughts.

- "Helping students connect advice given by a professional writer to their own writing."

- "I would like to improve the elaborate discussions in my classroom because I believe that it can enhance classroom learning."

- "I want to foster inquiry-based learning and more literacy in my classroom."

- "I aim for approximately 2 or 3 times a week [incorporating literacy strategies into the classroom], primarily using text tags and GOGO."

- "I would appreciate any heads up you have on such opportunities [observing other teachers to see how they are using literacy in their classrooms]. I am definitely interested."

- "I want to expand the number of literacy strategies I use—or at least that I try—especially in my math classes."

- "With students, want to educate them on different aspects of thinking. Must think through different things to process the information."

- "Can I keep all the students engaged?"

- "Make sure I ask a 'higher order' question during every class period."

- "[Student work in response to reading through drawing, writing, or art are displayed on walls in classrooms and in hallways] is important for freshmen because they can't always articulate ideas through writing, visuals are easier."

- "Need to develop a variety of ways to help students understand the vocabulary."

- "Help students understand vocabulary, not just memorize."

Student Data on Use of Literacy Strategies

The LLT has looked for many ways to assess the impact of our literacy program; below is one sample of the impact that using the Give One, Get One (GOGO) strategy had on

student performance. It was important to the team to collect and evaluate both qualitative and quantitative data.

Background of Sample

This sample was taken in two sophomore-level English II classes (First Block and Fourth Block) over a three-day period. Students read an article each day. While reading the first article, students used a literacy strategy to help them make connections to texts, remember important information, hold discussions with peers about their reading, and hold a classroom discussion about the reading. On the second day students did not use a literacy strategy and a whole class discussion of the reading followed. On the third day students were given a quiz designed to measure comprehension (questions on the quiz were taken directly from the text). Students were then asked to provide a written response to the question: How did your understanding of the article differ when a literacy strategy was used as opposed to when we did not use a literacy strategy?

Exceptions

Developmentally both classes were similar in abilities, but Fourth Block lacked the attention to detail that First Block had. Fourth Block consistently produced poorer results on tests, quizzes, papers, and projects due to not taking the time to study or produce the caliber of work First Block did. This helps to explain the slightly lower scores of Fourth Block over First Block.

Purpose of Sample

The sample was used to get an idea of how effective the literacy strategies were. Although the strategies are easy to adapt to any content area classroom, they do require a deeper reading of material, which in turn means more time is spent

on the activity. We wanted to ensure that using this valuable class time was worth the effort being expended on it. A more thorough study will be required to obtain future data.

Results

First Block

Article 1: Used Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	# of Students
A	10
B	4
C	5
D	0*
F	2

*0 indicates that no students received a D

Article 2: Did not use Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	# of Students
A	2
B	4
C	8
D	0*
F	7

*0 indicates that no students received a D

Fourth Block

Article 1: Used Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	# of Students
A	9
B	5
C	5
D	1
F	4

Article 2: Did not use Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	# of Students
A	1
B	0*
C	10
D	4
F	9

*0 indicates that no students received a B

Combined

Article 1: Used Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	With Literacy Strategy
A	19
B	9
C	10
D/F	7

Combined

Article 2: Did not use Literacy Strategy to read article

Grade	Without Literacy Strategy
A	3
B	4
C	18
D/F	20

Statistical Analysis

After compiling the data for both classes, we tested the null hypothesis that Grade and Use of a Literacy Strategy are independent (Literacy Strategies do NOT affect grades) versus

the alternative hypothesis that Grade and Use of a Literacy Strategy are dependent (Literacy Strategies do affect grades).

Conditions

The data gathered are counts that should be representative of a typical high school class. Grades are independent for each student. All expected values are at least five (refer to the table below), which allow the use of a chi-squared test for independence.

Observed Grade Distribution

Grade	With Literacy Strategy	Without Literacy Strategy
A	19	3
B	9	4
C	10	18
D/F	7	20

Expected Grade Distribution if Independent

Grade	With Literacy Strategy	Without Literacy Strategy
A	11	11
B	6.5	6.5
C	14	14
D/F	13.5	13.5

After reading the articles on two different days in two different classes students answered the question: How did your understanding of the article differ when a reading strategy was used as opposed to the day we did not use a reading strategy?

Students replied:

- "It made me understand the story more with a reading strategy, because it made me take time out of reading to write things down and understand them better."

- "With the Give One, Get One we could see more of what other people were thinking and see stuff if we missed it while reading. Today [without the literacy strategy] we just have our own opinions and only know other people's thoughts by the class discussion."

- "I noticed that I remembered more yesterday [when literacy strategies were used] and understood it much better."

- "Reading with a literacy strategy made us think more and we had a better discussion in class since we pinpointed specific thoughts and opinions."

- "It seemed easier to read the article and tag things you did and did not know. Tags make it easier to find things a second time and not lose your place. It's difficult to remember things you did not know when you don't use the strategy."

This study provides strong quantitative and qualitative evidence to suggest that the literacy strategies helped students perform better on the classroom assessment. In both classes more students received an A or B on the quiz after they read the article where the literacy strategy was used. Although students did not always like the extra work that came along with using the literacy strategies, it was clear from their performance and responses that they felt that the literacy strategies helped them to comprehend and retain material better. Students also commented that using the literacy strategies helped them hold richer conversations over the material

read with their peers which in turn led to richer whole class discussions.

The literacy strategies helped students relate to the material. They asked students to reflect on material they were reading that they already knew (prior knowledge), material they found interesting, and material that was new. Students recorded information from the text and provided citations to indicate where the material came from. This practice is directly aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Students were also expected to hold conversations with their peers about what they had read. This helped students see material from another's viewpoint and determine how their opinions were the same or different. In turn, the active reading that these literacy strategies promoted helped students remember the material better: partly because of the active reading that happened and also because of how students were required to connect the material with their daily lives. Using literacy strategies led to better classroom instruction, which was shown through daily activities and scores on assessments. There is a need for a future study that spans more classrooms and encompasses additional students to get widespread results for Olympia High School.

Conclusions

Qualitative data was included in the form of personal accounts. A selection of teachers were asked to submit a written reflection on their experiences in enhancing literacy and student learning in their classroom as well as their experience working with a literacy coach. This qualitative data has been transcribed in the accounts that follow.

Teacher A

"The literacy workshops under Lisa and Jill's leadership were extremely beneficial. They allowed teachers time to dis-

cuss literacy strategies in great detail. Different approaches for a variety of strategies were stressed. This and the coupling of hands-on practice with teachers outside our discipline as well as other department members made the workshops invaluable. They helped me find valid strategies that could be seamlessly implemented into my classroom and curriculum.

"My courses are not 'textbook' oriented beyond the introduction of major concepts. In most lessons, students are asked to use hands-on, problem-solving skills. The literacy workshops helped me develop activities relative to whichever concepts I might be emphasizing in any particular week. The literacy activities became motivation in themselves, commanding a student's attention as they were drawn from the hands-on activities to which they were accustomed.

"In Communication Technology, students were asked to write a detailed critique of a commercial print advertisement. This critique was to include a summarization of the different techniques the student believed to have been used by the designer. In addition, students were required to justify their analysis by connecting their observations to their own projects that required the same skills and techniques. This was followed up with an objective description of why the advertisement or artwork was or was not a successful design. The ultimate goal was for students to make 'connections' between what we do in class with the real world around us.

"Advanced Multimedia Technology is a course in which students used self-guided tutorials as an aid in learning about website design. Text tagging was a strategy students found very useful when they were in need of help. Each student worked at their own pace for the majority of the course. But if a student was struggling with a concept or term in their reading, they would tag the section with a sticky note if they did not need immediate attention. After individual help,

students were asked to write on the back of the note whether they 'Got It' and had no more questions, understood 'Some' but still had questions, or were just 'Not Getting It.'

"These sticky notes were then attached to our 'Take Aim' poster in the classroom and used in the next day's class introduction and problem review. We were able to reference their problems and discuss solutions.

"Another strategy involved the reading of lesson-relevant articles. Students then wrote about any personal connections they made with the article as well as any questions, opinions, or predictions they had after reading. Students shared these thoughts on a variety of different articles throughout the semester.

"I struggled with literacy activities prior to Lisa Castleman and Jill Uhlman's workshops.

"Primarily in the implementation phase. Going into training, I had a basic understanding of the goal of literacy strategies, but it was the hands-on approach we received during our workshops that really cleared the path for successful development and use of these strategies in my classes."

Teacher B

"As a new teacher, I was not sure how to approach using literacy techniques in my classroom. Throughout this past school year, I have attended two literacy workshops offered through the high school in order to better prepare myself to incorporate these skills in my teacher's toolbox. Those workshops helped me to better understand what literacy means in a classroom environment. When I began, I was under the impression that literacy was just reading and writing. As a vocational education teacher, I was not sure how to use, enhance reading or writing in my classroom. I soon learned that literacy was more than just reading and writing. Literacy is

the development of enhanced reading, writing, note-taking, and information processing skills. These literacy skills will be extremely valuable to students as they move into the upper levels of high school classes and on to various colleges, universities, or trade schools. My approach to literacy has changed because I have seen the power that literacy skills can build for a student. I have incorporated more note-taking skills so that taking notes is not a repetitive process, students now have several options. I have also incorporated more reading in my classroom activities and have seen student involvement and attention grow exponentially. Students can more readily access the pertinent information in various texts and use that as a springboard for conversation in a classroom format.

"I am also very thankful that my high school offers a literacy coach to each teacher. I have seen myself and my students grow by leaps and bounds with the assistance of my literacy coach. My coach provided me with great skills and activities to incorporate in my class in order to enhance student literacy and involvement. As a professional, I was able to ask questions, acquire new skills, and have a professional sounding board on literacy techniques. The feedback that my literacy coach provided with me in preobservation conferences and after literacy observations was extremely useful. I used the tips and advice that she gave me to improve my uses of literacy in the classroom. Especially as a new teacher, these meetings, coach assistance, and advice were valuable at developing myself as a teacher. Overall, the literacy program here has helped me in many ways and have helped my students better develop information processing, reading, writing, and note-taking skills. I am extremely thankful to work in a district with such dedicated literacy coaches and teachers because it creates a more educational and literacy-enhanced environment for other teachers and especially the students!"

Teacher C

"The literacy strategies I typically use in my classroom are Give One, Get One; text tags; exit tickets; stoplight; and Who Has, I Have. These are the best strategies I believe to help students learn in a foreign language classroom. They require all students to participate. Many students are shy to speak in front of their classmates, as they are afraid to pronounce the word incorrectly or have a wrong answer. The strategies I use are helpful to those students as everyone is expected to participate.

"Give One, Get One is useful for students to share information with other classmates. I tailor this activity to the topic we are currently discussing. Typically, the students must first read the article in the target language, find words they recognize, find words they don't recognize, ask classmates for three more words, and summarize the article. The students are able to share and obtain new ideas.

"I use various literacy strategies at the end of class such as exit tickets and the stoplight. These strategies are helpful to me, as the students tell me what they understand and don't understand. For the stoplight, I give each student a Post-it note. The students place their Post-it on green (I understand), on yellow (I have a question), or red (Help me). They are required to write on their Post-it too. For example, if a student understands what we discussed in class (the imperfect tense in Spanish), he/she will write down why it was understood or what made it easy for them to understand it and place it on green. If a student doesn't understand what a direct object is and how to use it in Spanish, he/she will write down why they don't understand it and place it on red. The exit ticket is also helpful because students let me know the easiest and most difficult vocabulary words as well as how they can use the words in everyday life. I use the information from these

two strategies as a warm-up the next day and focus on the information they don't understand."

Teacher D

"Teaching day after day, year after year, it is easy to get comfortable doing the same thing over and over, but also a little boring. I have welcomed the literacy training as a way to make my lessons more varied and enjoyable for myself and my students. I'm not the most creative person and have trouble coming up with new ideas on my own. With the literacy training, not only am I given new ideas for presenting material, but the strategies are demonstrated and practiced during the training. Then the coaches are available to help as I am trying to implement the new strategies.

"I have been to so many conferences and listened to so many speakers about how to improve my teaching and have been given ideas for the classroom. But then I go home with my nice notes about what the speaker said and most of the time it ends there. How nice it would be if those speakers could come to Olympia to help me incorporate those ideas into my classes and give me encouragement and answer my questions. That is what Olympia's literacy training does and that is why I think it has been effective.

"During the 2010–2011 school year I introduced Cornell note-taking to my classes. During the 2011–2012 school year I added the Give One, Get One reading strategy and used it three times. This past school year I still used the Cornell note-taking, used the Give One, Get One strategy six times, added illustrating vocabulary words and used it four times, used the exit ticket two times, and found a new literacy strategy called Ready, Set, Go, Whoa and used it once. As I continue to become comfortable with the new strategies, I will integrate them into my lesson plans even more often."

Recommendations

Based on our experiences and the findings of this report, the LLT recommends the following steps be taken during the 2013–2014 school year to enhance the literacy program at Olympia High School:

- Work with OHS Principal Lance Thurman to develop the OHS School Improvement Plan (SIP) centered on expanding and enhancing the literacy coaching program.

- Reorganize coaching responsibilities to work towards more continuity in the amount of coaching each teacher receives.

- Expand coaching to include implementation of the CCSS.

- Meet with individual departments during a block each semester to give more attention to specific content or department needs.

- Expand efforts to analyze the impact of literacy strategies in the classroom.

- Expand the role of Lisa Castleman and Jill Uhlman to include the title and responsibilities of LLT Project Managers.

- LLT Project Managers meet two to three times with CEC consultant Lilly Yow.

- LLT Project Managers given release time and stipend money to develop and facilitate the OHS literacy coaching program and literacy professional development.

- Develop a strategic schedule that will allow each literacy coach the opportunity to be in each classroom

at least once a month either conducting a formal observation or a drop-in visit.

- LLT Project Managers attend professional development including: Secondary Reading League's Day of Reading Workshop, National Louis University's Comprehensive Literacy, Illinois Reading Recovery Conference, and Illinois Reading Council's Annual Reading Conference.

- LLT Project Managers use professional development obtained to fit the Olympia "train the trainer" model and continue to provide professional development regarding effective literacy strategies to teachers at OHS and in the Olympia district.

- Continue to consult with Rexie Lanier at Evans Junior High School in Bloomington, IL.

- Consult with literacy coaches at Waukegan High School and Downers Grove South High School.

Conclusion

Our high school has experienced growth and progress through the literacy coaching model. Teachers are buying into the program and are increasing the implementation of literacy into their classrooms. The high school is developing a literacy-centered learning environment. While there has been growth and progress, there is work to be done. Observations, particularly the formal observation and conferencing process is not consistent between coaches. One significant problem we have is time; our coaching is done by four full-time teachers, who are balancing their classroom responsibilities as well as coaching duties. In most schools with a literacy coaching program, literacy coaches are either part-time or full-time release coaches. OHS literacy coaches naturally struggle

with the balance of coaching responsibilities and opportunities and the need to be in their classroom. Ideally, Olympia High School will consider shifting teaching responsibilities of coaches and/or Project Managers to open up at least one block during each day that coaches could devote to coaching responsibilities.

Unfortunately, while teachers value the program, they are still hesitant to open up their classroom doors. As the literacy program moves forward into the 2013–2014 school year, the LLT plans to provide additional professional development in regards to literacy and expand the focus to include the Common Core. The LLT will provide professional development and coaching through the department structure; this will allow an ability to address specific concerns for each content area. This report will also be shared with OHS department chairs and OHS teachers in part to allow teachers to celebrate the success of their efforts but also to allow teachers who may still be hesitant about the program to see the great opportunity that lies before them.

The literacy strategies pursued by the LLT work! One sample study is included in this report and multiple teachers provided additional qualitative data to support the use of these strategies. These literacy strategies focus on critical thinking, comprehension, and meaningful discussion, which lead to better retention and application of knowledge. OHS teachers were exposed to multiple literacy strategies during the 2012–2013 school year, and as the program moves forward additional strategies will be introduced and implemented throughout the school. A priority will continue to be to find strategies that teachers find both easy to use and applicable to all content areas.

Teachers at our high school were exposed to multiple literacy strategies through the Academy and Institute Days.

Teachers found these opportunities and format to be valuable and a good use of professional development time.

It is amazing to look back at the growth of the literacy program, and more importantly the growth of the teachers and students since the inception of the literacy program since August 2011.

Lisa Castleman is a teacher and literacy coach at Olympia High School in Stanford.

Jill Uhlman is a teacher and literacy coach at Olympia High School in Stanford.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO

THE *ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN*

As the written forum in which Illinois English teachers share their ideas, the *Illinois English Bulletin* welcomes all kinds of materials related to the teaching of English.

We seek articles dealing with literature, writing, language, media, speech, drama, film, culture, technology, standards, assessment, professional development, and other aspects of our profession. Any combination of research, theory, and practice is appropriate. Some articles take a formal and conclusive approach, while others are informal and exploratory.

Book reviews, poetry, black-and-white photographs, and line drawings are also welcome.

When you are ready to share your work with your colleagues across the state, please consult the submission guidelines on page 106. We look forward to hearing from you. If you have questions or suggestions for the editor, please don't hesitate to get in touch (contact information on page

108). Thank you for reading, supporting, and contributing to the *Illinois English Bulletin*.

Submission Guidelines

(See page 108 for the editor's contact information.)

- Via U.S. mail, send one clean, paper copy of the manuscript to the editor. See below for manuscript formatting guidelines and information to include in your cover letter.

- Attached to an e-mail message addressed to the editor, send an additional copy of the manuscript in an MS Word or PDF attachment. See below for manuscript formatting guidelines and information you should include in your e-mail message.

- In your cover letter (mailed with hard copy) and in your e-mail message (with electronic copy attached), include the following information: your manuscript title, name, mailing address, institutional affiliation, and phone number. Also indicate whether you are currently a member of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE). State that the manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

- Manuscript formatting guidelines: follow the current *MLA Handbook* guidelines for parenthetical in-text citations, the works cited section, and other technical elements; follow NCTE's "Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language"; place page numbers at the top right corner of every page; type and double-space throughout (including quotations, endnotes, and works cited), with one-inch margins all around.

- With both your paper and electronic manuscript submissions, please also include a biographical blurb of 50

words or fewer. (Blurbs for manuscripts with multiple authors should total 50 words or fewer.) Blurbs usually mention institutional and professional affiliations as well as teaching and research interests.

- The *Bulletin* editor will acknowledge receipt of your manuscript via e-mail.

Submission Deadlines

You are welcome to submit your materials at any time to the editor of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. Traditionally, the *Bulletin*'s spring issue features shorter articles based on presentations made at the previous autumn's IATE annual conference. Summer issues may be themed or all-inclusive. The fall issue presents the "Best Illinois Student Poetry and Prose." The winter issue is the program for our annual IATE fall conference.

To be considered for inclusion in the spring issue, materials must be received by the editors by the previous November 1.

To be considered for inclusion in the summer issue, materials must be received by the editors by the previous January 15.

To be considered for inclusion in the fall issue ("Best Illinois Student Poetry and Prose"), materials must be submitted electronically through the IATE submission manager (iate. submittable.com / submit) by the previous January 31. Please see page 109 for the two-page special submission guidelines for fall issues. Please note that as of 2005, the poet laureate of Illinois will designate several of the poems selected for publication in the *Bulletin* as "Poems of Exceptional Merit." These poems will be identified in a message written by the poet laureate and published in this issue of the *Bulletin*. The

poets will receive a certificate from the poet laureate in the U.S. mail.

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CALL FOR STUDENT WRITING FROM ALL LEVELS FOR IATE'S BEST ILLINOIS POETRY AND PROSE CONTEST

DEADLINE: Submit all contest entries electronically through the IATE submission manager (iate.submittable.com / submit) no later than January 31, 2015.

FORMAT: Accepted file types include .doc, .docx, and .rtf.

COVER LETTER: The "Cover Letter" field must include:
- Full name of student
- Student's grade level at time piece was written
- Full name of school
- School's complete mailing address
- Full name of teacher (indicate if IATE member)
- E-mail address of instructor

IMPORTANT: The student's name, the school's name, and the teacher's name must not appear anywhere other than in the "Cover Letter" field.

LIMITS:
1) Five prose and ten poetry entries per teacher.
2) One thousand words of prose per entry; forty lines of poetry per entry.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM THE JUDGES:
1) Please see that students abide by the line and word limits. Have them revise and shorten pieces that exceed these limits.
2) Please emphasize to students that prose and fiction are not synonymous. Encourage them to explore the possibilities of expository essays, arguments, and personal narratives.

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