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Implementing a School-to-Work Writing Program for Secondary Students: Linking Assessment with Instruction

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IMPLEMENTING A SCHOOL-TO-WORK WRITING PROGRAM
FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS:
LINKING ASSESSMENT WITH INSTRUCTION

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Education

by
Evelyn Hammer

May, 1997

IMPLEMENTING A SCHOOL-TO-WORK WRITING PROGRAM

FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS:

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The purpose of this project was to design and develop resources for school-wide writing at the secondary level that focuses on the transition from school to work. To accomplish this purpose, current research and literature on performance-based assessment, linking writing assessment with instruction, writing across the curriculum, and the School-to-Work movement were reviewed. Additionally, eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School participated in the practice of this study with an integrated Pathways School-to-Work writing project and a district-wide writing assessment. Finally, unit overviews, student learning objectives, performance criteria, teaching strategies, assessment and student expectations, and instructional materials were adapted and developed.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

"The ability to self-assess puts student writers in control of their learning. When they understand what to do and when and why, they become managers of their writing process rather than managers by it. They become teachers - of themselves and of one another - making their writing instruction more focused by sharing what they have learned through assessment. When criteria serve not just as the basis for judgment but as guidelines for learning, assessment and instruction become one seamless whole, and each gains power from the other" (Spandel & Stiggins, 1997, xi).

As suggested in the above statement by Spandel and Stiggins, assessment must be linked to writing instruction in order for students to have ownership. When students know the criteria for their writing, they are better able to compose and revise their work in a more purposeful way.

Writing for purpose means, essentially, that students are writing authentic works that reflect real-world practices. Research conducted by Shepard (1989) emphasizes the need for performance-based assessment.

Performance-based assessment refers to assessment activities that directly assess students' understanding and proficiency. They are well

suited to assess the application of content-specific knowledge, the integration of knowledge across subject areas, and lifelong learning competencies such as effective decision making, communication, and cooperation" (p. 8).

Simply providing authentic assessments is not enough, however. Herman (1996) points to the need for quality assessment by defining the measurements before assigning the writing.

Face validity - looking interesting, looking authentic, looking instructionally useful, looking like problem solving - is not enough. If we want the new alternatives to provide accurate information for sound decision making then they must function as reliable and valid measures of student accomplishment. Assessment practices must be accountable to criteria that define quality assessments." (p. 1-7).

Finally, with the current emphasis of restructuring schools, educators must understand that assessment is about desirable results for students. "Section III, Developing Student Learning Goals for the 21st Century, present issues and processes on what students should learn. If teachers are to align actions with desired results, these results have to be clear and believed" (Corbett and Blum, II-1: 2). Linking writing assessment with writing instruction fulfills the goal of establishing purpose for students while reinforcing quality and ownership of their writing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project was to design and develop resources for school-wide writing at the secondary level that focuses on the transition from school to work. To accomplish this purpose, current research and literature on performance-based assessment, linking writing assessment with instruction, writing across the curriculum, and the School-to-Work movement were reviewed. Additionally, eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School participated in the practice of this study with an integrated Pathways School-to-Work writing project and a district-wide writing assessment. Finally, unit overviews, student learning objectives, performance criteria, teaching strategies, assessment and student expectations, and instructional materials were adapted and developed.

Limitations of the Study

For purposes of this study, it was necessary to set the following limitations:

1. Scope: The project linking assessment with instruction for school-to-work would be designed for use by eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School.
2. Target Population: The project was specifically designed for use by eleventh grade students enrolled in language arts and social studies. The guidance department coordinated efforts with both departments by providing interest inventories, career guidance, and advice for scheduling senior classes to fit career goals.
3. Research: The majority of research and literature reviewed for the purpose of this study was limited to the past five (5) years.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of this study have been defined by Arter and Blum, 1996 (p. X-1) as follows:

1. Assessment: The process of quantifying, describing, or gathering information about evaluation.
2. Authentic assessment: Assessment tasks that elicit demonstrations of knowledge and skills in ways that resemble "real life" as closely as possible.
3. Criteria: Guidelines, rules, or principles by which student responses, products, or performances are judged.
4. Interdisciplinary or Integrated Assessment: Tasks that assess students' abilities to apply concepts, principles, and processes from two or more subject disciplines to a central question, theme, issue, or problem.
5. Performance Assessment: Direct observation of student performance or student work and professional judgment of the quality of that performance.
6. Portfolio: A purposeful, integrated collection of student work showing effort, progress, or achievement in one or more areas.
7. Proficiency: Having or demonstrating a high degree of knowledge or skill in a particular area.

8. Prompt: An assignment or directions asking the student to undertake a task or series of tasks.
9. Rubric: An established set of criteria for scoring or rating students' performance on tasks.
10. Scale: The range of scores possible on a test or individual performance task.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of research, ^{and literature} ~~and literature~~, summarized in Chapter Two has been organized to address the following:

1. Goals One and Four of the Washington State Commission on Student Learning
2. The School-to-Work Movement and Auburn School District's Pathways Program
3. Writing to Learn as a Tool for Writing Across the Disciplines
4. Writing Assessment and Instruction: The Six Trait Writing Model
5. Portfolio Assessment
6. Summary

Current data within the past five (5) years were identified through an Educational Resource Information Centers (ERIC) computer search. Additionally, the investigator (Evelyn Hammer) collected current information from attending National and Regional School-to-Work and Assessment Conferences within the past year. Finally, a hand search of various sources was also conducted.

Goals One and Four

of the Washington State Commission on Student Learning

With the work on Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the state of Washington (1996), writing has become a focus for schools. Following is an outline of the goals in writing and the benchmarks which support those goals.

Goal One: Write with Skill

- The student writes clearly and effectively.
- The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes.
- The student understands and uses the steps of the writing process.
- The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

Goal Four: School-to-Work

- The student understands the importance of work and how performance, effort and decisions directly affect future career and education opportunities.

The placement of writing as a primary Essential Learning has emphasized the need for teaching writing in a school-wide program. With that in mind, the following tools of Writing to Learn, Six-Trait Writing, and Portfolio Assessment serve to fulfill these requirements.

Auburn School District's Pathways Program

The School-to-Work Movement has been implemented in the Auburn School District through the Pathways Program, a process for restructuring both what and how we teach and how we assess learning. Pathways has been designed to help students see the connections between education and their personal lives. Academic and technical education are combined with practical learning activities. The six Pathways include the following:

1. Arts and Communication
2. Business Management
3. Engineering, Science, and Technology
4. Environmental and Natural Science
5. Health and Medical Services
6. Social and Personal Services

Pathways have been designed with a common core of classes and skills with specialized recommendations for electives, providing a career focus during high school and beyond. Each Pathway has been designed to improve communication skills, academic success, and thinking skills, increasing career opportunities. Personalized education plans and authentic assessment measures are key components. Students are able to move between Pathways as their interests develop or change. Additionally, each student has the opportunity to job shadow a particular career in each Pathway.

Writing to Learn as a Tool for Writing Across the Disciplines

Writing to Learn has its roots in the Writing across the Curriculum movement of the seventies. Since that time, William Zinsser has been the leading proponent of the value of writing for discovery. Through the act of writing about a subject matter, wrestling with the thinking process on paper, the writer arrives at new learning. "An act of writing is an act of thinking" (Writing to Learn, p. 53) and teachers must allow for more opportunities to think out the process of problem-solving on paper. Whether in chemistry, history, music, or horticulture, students can reflect on their learning by writing summaries, questions, or reflections. This problem-solving on paper has been at the core of Writing to Learn.

Writing to Learn has been referred to as thinking on paper - thinking to discover connections, describe processes, express emerging understandings, raise questions, and find answers (Writer's Inc., p. 70). Writing to Learn activities have been adaptable for all ages, grades K - 12, and across the disciplines. Because these activities are for the purpose of discovery and learning, the writing is not assessed. Therefore, Writing to Learn activities has offered a good starting place for teachers to begin using writing in their classes. Writing non-stop for five minutes in a Learning Log, making a list, recording observations, or making surveys, for instance, requires little response from the teacher but a weekly or monthly check. This has led to fluency, students and teachers writing daily about their thinking.

Writing to Learn has enabled students to personalize and internalize learning so that they can better understand and remember. It has encouraged abstract, higher-

level thinking. Writing to Learn activities have differed from assessed writing in several important ways:

<u>Writing to Learn</u>	<u>Formal Writing</u>
• spontaneous	• planned
• short	• lengthy
• exploratory	• transactional
• informal	• formal
• personal	• impersonal
• unedited	• polished
• ungraded	• graded

Writing to Learn has allowed all teachers to be teachers of writing and thinking. Writing is both an internal (content) and external (mechanics) activity. Since all teachers are experts in their content area, they are well equipped to help students with the internal side of writing. They can help students gather, organize, and react to the content of their writing.

Writing to Learn is not the same as writing to show learning. Its purpose is learning, not showing what has already been learned. Writing to Learn should be thought of as a tool for learning, a tool that works best when it is comfortable in the hands of the user. Students should use the language they “think” in - language that is personal, informal, colloquial - as close to their everyday speech as possible (Writer’s Inc, 1996).

Writing cannot be left to just the English teachers, Zinsser states. "In history we've paid great lip service to the need to write, but we haven't taken the time in our classes to tell students how it's done. . . . It takes a commitment. . . ." (Writing to Learn 45). Teachers are obviously concerned about adding more content to their already busy schedules. "What about the paperload?" they bemoan, and rightly so. Writing to Learn, however, does not put a strain on the paperload if a Learning Log or Writer's Notebook is a daily part of the routine. Writing for five minutes at the beginning of the period, stopping and writing for reflection during class, and summarizing learning at the end of each period can be organized in a spiral notebook that is checked monthly. At that time, the teacher quickly checks the student's writing for reflection on the subject matter at hand. Writing about failures, questions, and problems can benefit the learner more than merely writing one answer as the solution.

Writing to Learn has opened the door for all teachers to teach writing. It makes sense because all writers, teachers and students, learn from the process of writing and thinking. It is through the process of writing that people learn.

Writing Assessment and Instruction: The Six Trait Writing Model

The Six Trait Writing Model for Assessment and Instruction began when a fourth grade teacher in Oregon, Ronda Woodruff, spent several weeks as an evaluator of a state writing assessment. She learned from the process of assessment what traits made up good writing and compiled those six traits for her students to improve their writing. From there, Vicki Spandel and Ruth Culham, with the support of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory compiled resources that now comprise the Six Trait Writing Model (Spandel, 1996).

Adopted in Oregon and throughout the Northwest, this powerful tool has been founded on common sense that good writing is made up of six traits - Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions - and that these traits can be taught directly to students. Through the use of professional models, picture books, and anonymous sample student papers, students grasp these six traits and begin practicing them in their own writing.

Good criteria form the basis not only of quality writing assessment but also of quality instruction in writing. Specific, clearly identified criteria remind us precisely what it is we're looking for. They are part of a broader vision of what makes writing work (Spandel & Stiggins, 1997, p.22).

The assessment aspect of Six Trait Writing is particularly powerful. Students assess to learn. Learning to assess and to look deep within is essential to students' understanding of their own writing and of the act of writing itself (p. 23). Students first look at anonymous student samples of either very high or very low papers. After

practicing assessment of these papers, students can begin assessing their own writing. Self-assessment has been at the heart of the model after many opportunities to practice assessing anonymous samples.

With training in the six traits, students begin to assess their own writing. Spending at least two weeks on each of the six traits allows for the most success, although if teachers throughout a school are teaching the traits, students will learn this vocabulary much faster. By enabling students to self-assess for revision and improvement of writing, teachers have empowered writers to grow and move up the scale from beginning to emerging and, finally, to strong. The circular nature of the writing process has reinforced the placement of the Six Trait Writing instruction enabling students to revise their work before final evaluation. Teachers must, ultimately, write first for ourselves and then for an audience.

The Six Trait Model has been a tool applicable to all grade levels and every discipline. Teachers can read samples of good or poor writing from computer manuals to catalogs and travel brochures. This analytical assessment has emphasized the importance of sharing the criteria for grading before giving the writing assignment. Quality assessment begins with a vision of success. Evaluating the process as well as the product and providing opportunities for revision have been essential steps in successfully implementing the Six Trait Writing Model (Spandel & Stiggins, p. 39).

Making the purpose for writing clear has ensured better writing from students. Spandel has shared her experience with the importance of a writing prompt that draws on a writer's experience, allows for choice in topics, and sparks the writer's imagination.

A poorly written prompt will result in a poorly written composition (Blum & Arter, V-4, p.

1).

Spandel and Stiggins (pgs. 41-42) have summarized four reasons for the effectiveness of assessing to learn through the Six Trait Writing Model:

1. Teachers using written scoring guides to assess writing can score papers rapidly.

"The criteria become a kind of shorthand through which student and teacher communicate about writing."

2. Students who know the traits of good writing feel less confused and bewildered by the feedback they receive.

3. Students will gradually move toward independence in their writing. This means that over time they will assume control, with the teacher's guidance, for their own writing. Students learn to assess their own work and to revise and edit for themselves. Then they gain full ownership of and full power over their words - and their writing improves.

4. The analytical assessment makes the teaching of writing more effective and easier through provisions of good models and well-defined criteria.

Six Trait Writing, like Writing to Learn, has been based on common sense.

Writers need to know what readers look for in good writing. Writers need to hear good writing frequently and contrast it with poor writing written by anonymous writers.

Through the practice of assessing anonymous papers, students learn tools to assess their own writing. Through self-assessment and peer assessment, student writers improve their skills. When teachers write with students, provide clear criteria, and

create good writing prompts, they enable students to gain experiences in becoming lifelong writers and learners.

Portfolio Assessment

LeMahieu and Eresh (1992) refer to America 2000 goals which call for an articulation of clear, high standards for what students should know (content) and how well they should know it (performance) as well as a push for states to establish the means for assessment. They have emphasized that America's history is thin when it comes to standard setting and assessment; we are accustomed to testing our students with standardized tests only. Evidence will be found in the way teachers teach children and in the way principals allow for common planning time for teachers.

The authors have discussed internal accountability through portfolios. Students must be able to document their learning. The initial portfolio has replaced the quarterly final allowing students to reflect to what is worth documenting. At semester time, students select samples from each class for a semester portfolio conference with an adult advisor. A letter home accompanying the portfolio and a report card or narrative serve as measurements. The year-end portfolio draws on all the best of the student's work, evidence of progress and growth. Presentations of these exhibits have been given to committees made up of advisors, a teacher, and the student. Students also have referred to their year-end portfolios to show newcomers students what to expect.

Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) have outlined eight guidelines for portfolios that encourage self-directed learning. By including all eight guidelines, students have assumed ownership and portfolios reflect a marriage of instruction and assessment.

1. Portfolios must show student self-reflection: what have they learned about learning?
2. Students must be involved in selecting the pieces included in a portfolio.
3. The portfolio is separate and different from the student's cumulative folder.
4. The portfolio must show the student's purpose, goals, contents, standards, and judgments.
5. By the end of the year, a portfolio may contain only material that the student is willing to make public.
6. A portfolio should reflect progress in student goals that coincide with the goals of the district.

Wiggins (1989) has argued that tests should more accurately measure the skills we want students to have: writing, speaking, listening, creating, researching, analyzing, and problem-solving. Performances in art and athletics have reflected a more authentic testing than traditional standardized, content-heavy tests. Wiggins has stated that restructuring that begins backwards, that is, thinking of graduation requirements in planning essential skills to be taught. Emphasis has been placed on a student's demonstration of a set of skills. Process has been stressed along with product. Representing a performance in a given field, authentic tests are public in nature including oral presentations, panels, or portfolios. They have required some collaboration from others and involve criteria that assess essentials. Self-assessment has been necessary in authentic testing.

Wiggins has promoted a performance-based diploma based on exit-level standards. The Rite of Passage Experience (R.O.P.E) at Racine, Wisconsin, was

stated as a model in which an eight-part portfolio is intended to be a reflection of the senior's own life and learning. The requirements have included a written autobiography, a reflection on work, an essay on ethics, a written summary of coursework in science, an artistic product on art, a research project on history, and a presentation on subject area work. A diploma has been awarded to those students passing 12 of the 15 presentations and meeting district requirements in core classes.

1. The portfolio must contain information that shows how a student's skills have improved through inventories, records of outside activities attitude measures and writing pieces.
2. Students need models of portfolios as examples for their own work.

Alternatives to standardized testing have focused on reflective self-evaluations with the use of portfolios that help students think about their learning instead of merely reciting facts. Questioning, investigating, thinking, and writing have been characteristics of processes involved in portfolio reflection. The author has encouraged student responsibility in questioning and reflecting on one's own work and on finding ways of capturing growth and development over time.

Portfolios have promoted reflection from students who look over the process of their writing from first draft to final revisions. Students have asked themselves what works and what does not, considering the choices they made to revise a piece of writing to completion. In essence, students have created a story about their story or essay - a long-term account of what and how they learn. By the end of a semester or

year, students know their histories as writers while teachers understand their own processes for revising an assignment (Wolf, 1989).

Portfolio Assessment has been a natural step following immersion in the Six-Trait Writing Model. From frequent Writing to Learn activities and assignments based on good writing prompts, students will have a collection of writing in a folder. Periodically, perhaps every other week, students select their best writing for a portfolio. Students then reflect on why they chose that piece of writing and what they learned about that writing. Again, this reflection returns to Writing to Learn. By writing about their own process, students begin to see how their work reflects improvement, gradually comparing it with other compositions written throughout the semester and year. By writing about their writing, students chart their own growth.

In a portfolio, students create a table of contents, an opening essay detailing the story behind the portfolio, representative finished pieces reflecting their best writing, a cover sheet attached to each piece of writing discussing the reason for its selection and evaluation sheets. Evaluation can be as simple as assessing portfolios with phrases that encourage revision and growth: Not Yet, Developing, and Strong. Portfolios can be assessed according to the following criteria: change over time, diversity of projects, evidence of problem solving, organization, and self-reflection (Spandel, 1996).

With a focus on career development, portfolios are particularly useful. Ultimately, students create a portfolio with the objective of obtaining a job after high school. In the portfolio are writing samples, letters, video projects, photographs of artwork as well as reflections about each piece selected. (Rahn & Rossi, 1995).

The Career Preparation Assessment introduced by West Ed of San Francisco, California (1996), introduces a more specialized portfolio. The components include a personal statement outlining career goals, a resume, a job application, a letter of recommendation, work samples from vocational or science classes, a writing sample, a teacher's evaluation of the student's interpersonal skills, and student transcripts and awards. This kind of portfolio has reflected the current interest in evaluation that provides for authentic assessment beyond high school.

Portfolio assessment has provided students with a tangible product that requires them to reflect on the process as well. By writing about the pieces they have selected in their portfolios, students have raised their awareness and have encouraged their own growth as writers.

The latest development in portfolio assessment lies in its availability on computer. With this technology, students can track their progress - in a variety of media- for all four years of high school incorporating it into their work world.

The use of Writing to Learn activities, the Six Trait Writing Model, and portfolio assessment all lend themselves as tools to reinforcing writing skills in all grades and content areas. As a requirement of the Essential Learnings of our state, writing provides the means for reaching all students. With the focus on transitioning from school to work, it has become essential to evaluate our own writing assessment procedures. Authentic assessment in the form of portfolios has offered a means of self-reflection and choice for students who all desire a sense of ownership in their writing.

Summary

The research and literature summarized in Chapter Two have supported the following themes:

1. Goals One and Four of the Washington State Commission on Student Learning emphasize the importance of improving student writing and on understanding the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and education opportunities.
2. The School-to-Work Movement and Auburn School District's Pathways Program emphasize a design to help students see the connections between education and their personal lives through six Pathways that relate academics to vocational interests.
3. Writing to Learn is thinking on paper - thinking to discover connections, describe processes, express emerging understandings, raise questions, and find answers across all the disciplines.
4. Writing assessment and instruction are linked by the Six Trait Writing Model where students become familiar with effective writing components and regularly develop the skills of self-assessment ultimately taking ownership of their writing.
5. Portfolios allow for authentic assessment where students reflect on why they chose a piece of writing and what they learned about that writing.

CHAPTER THREE

Procedures of the Study

The purpose of this project was to design and develop resources for school-wide writing at the secondary level that focuses on the transition from school to work. To accomplish this purpose, current research and literature on performance-based assessment, linking writing assessment with instruction, writing across the curriculum, and the School-to-Work movement were reviewed. Additionally, eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School participated in the practice of this study with an integrated Pathways School-to-Work writing project and a district-wide writing assessment

Chapter ³ III contains background information describing the following:

1. Need for the study
2. Development of support for the study
3. Procedures
4. Planned implementation and assessment of the study

Need for the Study

The need for this project was influenced by the following considerations:

1. The writer (Evelyn Hammer), a secondary language arts instructor, was currently teaching two eleventh grade American Literature/Writing classes at Auburn Riverside High School, Auburn, Washington and searching for ways to help

students make a connection between writing assessment and instruction and the Pathways School-to-Work Model implemented in the Auburn School District.

2. The writer's fifteen years of secondary language arts teaching experience resulted in recognition of the instructional benefits of integrating social studies and language arts with career counseling.
3. The writer's involvement in the Auburn School District's K-12 Language Arts Adoption had led to training in writing assessment and instruction. As a result, she led several workshops for secondary educators on developing writing skills which answered the Essential Learning #1 goal of the Washington State Commission on Student Learning.
4. The writer's involvement in the Pathways (School-to-Work) Steering Committee, the Career Center Advisory Committee, and ongoing interaction with the guidance department at Auburn Riverside High School had fostered extensive dialogue about the necessity for promoting relevance and decision-making through writing across the curriculum.
5. Current research findings and evidence supported student motivation and learning through performance assessment and interdisciplinary studies within a context of writing about the world of work.
6. Undertaking this project coincided with graduate studies in Educational Administration at Central Washington University.

Development of Support for the Study

Beginning in June of 1995, the writer was a part of a team of educators who opened a new high school in the Auburn School District. From 1995 until the spring of 1997, the writer was engaged in conferences, workshops, and graduate classes that addressed current assessment practices linking performance assessment with instruction, and the need for promoting writing assignments that encouraged problem solving and decision making about careers. The writer began discussing plans for developing an integrated Pathways School-to-Work project for eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School with the Assistant Principal, Nola Wilson, the guidance department, Dan Polley, Laurie Wilson, Jan Sigurdson, Katia Parkes, and James Miles, the librarian, Linda Stevens, and social studies teacher Carol Barnett. These individuals encouraged and supported the idea of developing a project that integrates language arts, social studies, and career counseling for eleventh grade students, emphasizing problem solving and decision making through writing. Linking writing assessment with instruction was the goal of the language arts teachers involved in this project while social studies teachers would design oral presentations for assessment.

Procedures

To obtain background information essential for developing components within an integrated curriculum, an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) computer search was undertaken. Additionally, a hand search of various other sources was also conducted. Finally, research and training with the Auburn School District Writing

Assessment sponsored by the Northwest Regional Laboratory of Portland, Oregon, provided sources for the project.

From October 1996 to May of 1997, the writer developed this project implementing writing assessment and instruction for an integrated school-to-work project. To facilitate this process, a Student Learning Improvement Grant (SLIG) funded release time for teachers and counselors to plan a unit. Grant money also funded a school-wide writing workshop to educate our staff on writing assessment and instruction as aligned with the goals of the Washington Commission on Student Learning. The project concluded with the Auburn School District Writing Assessment of eleventh grade students which evaluated student writing based on the Six Trait Writing Model developed by Vicki Spandel.

Planned Implementation and Assessment of the Study

As a result of the planning time funded through the Student Learning Improvement Grant, four departments, including eight language arts teachers, five social studies teachers, five counselors, and one librarian, designed and developed an integrated project for eleventh grade students implemented in February and March of 1997 at Auburn Riverside High School. The project that integrates writing assessment and instruction across the curriculum will be adopted as a pilot program and evaluated by participating staff, students, and administration for revision, adding the use of portfolios, in the 1997-1998 school year.

Assessment of the project was designed as a questionnaire for students, teachers, and counselors (see Appendix A). The majority of students polled agreed

with the value of the assignment but expressed confusion with the lack of integration between disciplines and the length of time the unit took. This can be revised through release time granted the summer of 1997 to plan with a team of teachers and counselors. The teachers expressed a concern for lack of planning time to integrate the unit more meaningfully. Counselors were concerned with revision of the unit since they believed students saw little connection between the beginning of the unit (career inventories) and the end of the unit (scheduling for senior classes). The writer's assessment is that planning time is essential for teachers and counselors to develop ownership of the idea. Student writing reflects the primary benefit of this exercise. Students did indeed personalize information about the biography and relate their own career interests with their current skills and interests.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Project

The project that Integrates Language Arts, Social Studies, and Career Counseling with Writing Assessment and Instruction designed for eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School, Auburn, Washington, has been presented in Chapter ⁴IV, in three (3) units, including the following:

Unit 1 - Writing Assessment and Instruction: The Six Trait Writing Model

Unit 2 - Writing to Learn and Performance Assessment: The Pathways Biography Unit

Unit 3 - Portfolio Assessment: A Plan for Implementation 1997-1998

**IMPLEMENTING A SCHOOL-TO-WORK WRITING PROGRAM
FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS:
LINKING ASSESSMENT WITH INSTRUCTION**

Auburn School District #408
Auburn Riverside High School
Eleventh Grade

Evelyn Hammer, Instructor

May, 1997

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Unit 1

Writing Assessment and Instruction:

The Six Trait Writing Model

- Unit Overview
- Student Learning Objectives
- Performance Criteria
- Teaching Strategies
- Assessment and Student Expectations
- Instructional Materials

Unit Overview

Writing is most beneficial to students when instruction and assessment are linked. The Six Trait Writing Model provides this connection for students with tools applicable at all grade levels and in every discipline. This analytical assessment emphasizes the importance of sharing the criteria for grading before giving the writing assignment. From there, students practice assessment of anonymous student papers using analytical scoring which leads to the practice of self-assessment. The ownership of writing occurs when students have choices in the topic and are asked to draw on their interests and experience.

Student Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following:

- Identify the six traits of effective writing in various models:
(Voice, Word Choice, Ideas, Organization, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions)
- Determine the criteria for assessment before writing
- Revise and edit for themselves
- Assess others' and their own writing using an analytical scoring rubric

Performance Criteria

Students will complete an analytical assessment of an anonymous student paper by scoring the assignment according to the Six Trait Writing Model. Students will apply their knowledge of the Six Trait Writing Model to an essay on Choosing a Path, a part of the Pathways Biography unit.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies include the following:

- Class discussion: eliciting from students the traits of effective writing
- Cooperative learning teams: scoring anonymous student papers for the six traits
- Independent study: revising, editing, and assessing their own writing

Assessment/Student Expectations

Activities will be consistent with unit student learning objectives and will include the following:

- Maintaining a resource notebook containing hand-outs on the Six Trait Writing
- Maintaining a student writing examples for assessment

Instructional Materials/Technology

Resources include the following:

- Hand-outs on the Six Trait Writing Model and Scoring Guide
- District adopted textbook: Writer's Inc.
- Supplemental anonymous student papers and professional models
- Microsoft Word for Windows

Unit 2

Writing to Learn and

Performance Assessment:

The Pathways Biography Unit

- Unit Overview
- Student Learning Objectives
- Performance Criteria
- Teaching Strategies
- Assessment and Student Expectations
- Instructional Materials

Unit Overview

The Pathways Biography Unit involves students in Writing to Learn activities as well as performance assessment through the Six Trait Writing Model. Eleventh grade students select a biography of a person who has impacted American culture by contributing a new idea or whose career interests the student. This unit incorporates Writing to Learn strategies encouraging students to think about the successes and setbacks of the subject's decision-making and problem-solving. Students write daily in a spiral notebook while reading their biography in both U.S. History and American Literature/Writing classes.

The career component of the Pathways unit involves the counselors who review the results of the KUDER and CFAS tests in classes connecting those results with possible career choices. In addition, students use the WOIS (Washington Occupational Inventory Survey) and ExPan computer programs which provide resources for college, vo-tech training and career choices.

Once information about the biography and the career of interest is found, the students focus on the skills of outlining and giving oral presentations. Students present the information about their biographies to the U.S. History class and receive peer assessments. The final assessment occurs in the American Literature/Writing classes which involves using the journal writing to compose a personal essay. The essay combines an analysis of the decisions and choices made in the biography with the student's own decisions thus far in life. Students are then encouraged to focus on a career of interest, explaining the training and skills necessary in reaching that goal.

Student Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following:

- learn about a career by reading a biography
- complete an outline of their biographies
- presented the information to their U.S. History classes using a visual aid or props
- gather information about one's own interests and goals through writing to learn activities
- visit the computer lab for more information on careers and training using WOIS and ExPan
- prepare a personal essay on their own beginnings, turning points, skills, goals, and insights from reading the biography

Performance Criteria

Students will complete a journal with Writing to Learn activities and compose a personal essay following the Six Trait Writing Model in American Literature/Writing classes. Students will compose an outline of the biography and present information to the class on what they learned about careers from the biography.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies include the following:

- Direct instruction on Writing to Learn for the writer's notebook
- Independent study of selecting a biography in reading in class
- Cooperative learning teams on biography discussions
- Hands-on involvement with computer programs WOIS and ExPan
- Cooperative learning teams on assessing the personal essay

Assessment/Student Expectations

Activities will be consistent with unit student learning objectives and will include the following:

- Maintaining a daily journal
- Outlining the successes, setbacks, turning points of the biography
- Presenting information to the class
- Composing a personal essay on one's own successes, skills, and career goals while analyzing those from the biography read in class
- Assessing one's own writing through the Six Trait Writing Model

Instructional Materials/Technology

Resources include the following:

- Career Inventory tests: CFAS and KUDER
- College and Career technology: WOIS and ExPan
- Supplemental materials for journal activities
- District adopted textbook: Writer's Inc.
- Library resources on biographies and autobiographies
- Computer resources: Internet and PowerPoint

UNIT 3

Portfolio Assessment:

A Plan for Implementation 1997-1998

- Unit Overview
- Student Learning Objectives
- Performance Criteria
- Teaching Strategies
- Assessment and Student Expectations
- Instructional Materials

Unit Overview

Use of student portfolios in The Pathways Biography Unit will be studied and implemented in the 1997-1998 school year. Students will complete or update a resume of experience on the computer portfolio and begin compiling personal information in the ExPan program for post-secondary school applications. Students will reflect on and write about each component in the portfolio, adding some of the journal activities and the personal essay. Students will be encouraged to place two examples of their best work from another discipline of interest which would relate to a career choice. Examples are in vocational or academic classes such as Visual Communications, Jewelry, Horticulture, Chemistry, or Home and Family Life.

In the portfolio, students create a table of contents, an opening essay detailing the story behind the portfolio, representative finished pieces reflecting their best writing, a cover sheet attached to each piece of writing discussing the reason for its selection and evaluation sheets. Evaluation can be as simple as assessing portfolios with phrases that encourage revision and growth: Not Yet, Developing, and Strong. Portfolios can be assessed according to the following criteria: change over time, diversity of projects, evidence of problem solving, organization, and self-reflection

With a focus on career development, portfolios are particularly useful.

Ultimately, students create a portfolio with the objective of obtaining a job after high school. In the portfolio are writing samples, letters, video projects, photographs of artwork as well as reflections about each piece selected.

Student Learning Objectives

The student will be able to do the following:

- Develop skills using technology to record and update personal resumes and college applications using the ExPan program
- Reflect on the personal essay in a computer portfolio
- Add information to a working portfolio on a subject of interest that may lead to a career choice

Performance Criteria

Students will complete independent projects developing and updating a resume and post-secondary application. Students will reflect on the writing of their personal essay and add examples of work from subjects of interest to their working portfolios with the goal of choosing a career.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies will include the following:

- Direct instruction on technology tools: ExPan and Word for Windows
- Independent study
- Cooperative learning teams to assess portfolio performance
- Cooperation and collaboration with students, teachers, and counselors on determining career choices

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to design and develop resources for school-wide writing at the secondary level that focuses on the transition from school to work. To accomplish this purpose, current research and literature on performance-based assessment, linking writing assessment with instruction, writing across the curriculum, and the School-to-Work movement were reviewed. Additionally, eleventh grade students at Auburn Riverside High School participated in the practice of this study with an integrated Pathways School-to-Work writing project and a district-wide writing assessment. Finally, a plan for implementing portfolio assessment and revising the unit with a team of teachers and counselors was described.

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of this project were the following:

1. The responsibility for improving the instruction and assessment of writing must be shared by all disciplines, not merely the language arts department.
2. Emphasizing a design to help students see the connections between education and their personal lives by incorporating thinking on paper is useful for all disciplines.
3. By teaching the skills of self-assessment to all students, the burden of assessment is relieved for teachers while the ownership of writing falls on the student.

Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. Training all teachers, not simply the language arts department, the value of linking writing instruction with assessment ensures improved writing in the schools.
2. Using Writing to Learn strategies help students think on paper about their own interests in the world of work, linking all disciplines to writing for discovery.
3. Teaching specific criteria for effective writing and sharing models of good and poor writing help to reinforce the six traits across the disciplines.
4. Portfolios allow for authentic assessment where students reflect on their own growth and development, relating writing to the world of work.

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Appendix A

A Language Arts Moment: Parent Newsletter Auburn Riverside High School Fall 1996

What is Six-Trait Writing? Many of our students are taking home packets about the six traits that teachers (and everyone) look for in good writing. It's common sense, really, nothing very new. It just makes sense to teach writers the characteristics of effective writing and then show them how to evaluate their own writing to improve their compositions.

- Voice: this sounds like a real person wrote it; you are involved in the writing.
- Ideas: you have something to say with enough content to develop one focus.
- Organization: you know how to say it; the beginning and ending act like bookends.
- Word Choice: you chose words that paint pictures, yet your language is simple and clear.
- Sentence Fluency: your writing lends itself to being read aloud; sentences are varied.
- Conventions: you were attentive to correctness in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Ask your son or daughter to tell you about the six traits and how they are learning to assess their own writing. It's not really a new tool, just packaged to encourage writers to know what teachers look for in writing. Six-Trait Writing. It's catching on.

Appendix B

ARHS Pathways Inservice: November 14th 3 - 6 p.m. Why Write Right Workshop

Featuring "Six-Treat Sundaes with Four Essential Toppings" at 2:30 p.m. Cafeteria

Objective: to support Essential Learning #1 and #4: writing skills and school-to-work

- I. Overview: Cafeteria (45 minutes)
 - A. Bruce Phillips: Share the School Mission Statement (5 minutes)
 - B. Essential Learnings on Writing and School-to-Work
 - C. Writing prompt: Describe a memorable writing teacher.
 1. Rationale: the way we were taught (or not taught) may be the way we teach writing
 2. Many of us have not written since college days.
 - C. Share your writing with a partner.
 - D. Large-group de-briefing:
 1. How many of us were taught writing?
 2. Were we just expected to write without understanding the criteria for good writing?
 3. How were we assessed?
 4. How did we learn to improve our writing?
 5. How much writing do we expect in our classrooms?
 6. How do we manage the paper load?
 - E. Research from William Zinsser: On Writing Well and Writing to Learn
 1. Writing is an essential skill required in the workplace.
 2. In order to improve student writing, writing should be practiced in all classes, not just in language arts.
 3. Writing produces learning. We write to discover what we have learned.
 4. We must write along with the students in order to understand our writing process.
 - F. Comic relief: Mrs. Feathersbee)
 - G. Overview of Six-Trait Writing for Instruction and Assessment
 1. We must first understand what constitutes "good" writing.
 2. Effective writing has common attributes in any curriculum, not just in language arts.
 3. Writers improve when they understand how to assess their own writing.
- (Break)
- II. Break-out Sessions: four classrooms (25 min. sessions with five minute passing time) (S)
 - A. The student writes clearly and effectively: Explanation of Six-Trait Writing
 1. Show how the six traits of writing apply across the curriculum.
 2. Presenters: Sue Neu and Cindy Blansfield

- B. The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes. (Library)
 - 1. Demonstrate how a variety of read-alouds from the various subject matters can reinforce the components of good writing in the world of work.
 - 2. Presenters: Carol Barnett, Dana Hinman, Judy Shaw, Sharon Hegewald, Linda Stevens
- C. The student understands and uses the steps of the writing process. (Horticulture)
 - 1. Show how writing is a process, not just a product.
 - 2. By writing, we discover our own learning process. (Writing to Learn)
 - 3. Demonstrate examples of learning logs in various classrooms.
 - 4. Presenters: Evie Hammer and Ronda Kurka,
- D. The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work. (VisCom)
 - 1. Show the Six-Trait model for assessing student writing.
 - 2. Explain how critiques are a part of meshing work and school.
 - 3. Presenters: Lynette Stock and Chrystal DeCoster

III. Guest Speaker Conclusion: Cafeteria (15 minutes)

- A. Jim Eagle: How we use writing in the workplace.
- B. Evaluations/Clock hours

Appendix C
The Pathways Biography Unit
U.S. History and American Lit/Writing
Auburn Riverside High School

Assignment: Select a biography or autobiography of someone who has impacted American culture or whose career interests you.

Objective: To trace the roots, decisions, setbacks, and successes of another in order to gain an understanding of our own process in choosing a career.

Skills Focus:

1. Finding resources: ARHS Library, Auburn Public Library, bookstores, or home.
2. Outlining: Roots, decision-making process, setbacks, and successes.
3. Giving Oral Presentations: knowing your audience, creating effective visuals, practicing active listening, and using capitalization correctly.

Criteria for Selection:

1. Select a person whose life impacted American culture by contributing new ideas.
2. Select a person, past or present, whose career interest you.

Playwrights Neil Simon Tennessee Williams Lillian Hellman William Shakespeare	Artists Georgia O'Keefe Frank Lloyd Wright Pablo Picasso	Musicians John Lennon Jimi Hendrix Ella Fitzgerald Leonard Bernstein Elvis Presley	Entertainers Johnny Carson Walt Disney Oprah Winfrey Woody Harrelson	Writers Maya Angelou John Steinbeck Alice Walker Studs Terkel Langston Hughes Michael Crichton
Culinary Artists Julia Child	TV/Film Directors Jon Huston Steven Spielberg	Fashion Designers Donna Karan Liz Claiborne	Psychologists Jean Piaget Elizabeth Kubler- Ross	Educators John Dewey Helen Keller
Explorers Amelia Earhart Lewis & Clark Charles Lindbergh	Inspirational /Motivational Personalities Joni Erickson Anne Frank Coretta S. King	Photo- Journalists Jacob Riis Ansel Adams Gordon Parkes	Military Colin Powell John J. Pershing	Scientists/Math- ematicians Diane Fossey Albert Einstein Carl Sagan
Entrepreneurs Sam Walton Mary Kay Bill Gates Nordstrom	Medical Professionals James Herriot	Inventors Thomas Edison Benjamin Franklin	Politicians JFK Abraham Lincoln Patty Murray	Athletes Michael Jordan Babe Ruth Ty Cobb Billie Jean King

Appendix D

Overview of Skills in the Biography Unit Auburn Riverside High School

Overview of Activities:

1. Select a biography or autobiography of a person who has impacted American culture by contributing a new idea or whose career interests you. Bring this book to both U.S. History and American Lit/Writing each day for reading and group work.
2. Write a bibliographic entry of your book.
3. Outline the starting point of your subject including birth place and date, historical significance, family background, and major influences. Include a few important quotes from the book, citing the page number for each.
4. Outline the major turning points, decisions, and career beginnings of your subject. Who and what made the difference in this person's life?
5. Outline major setbacks and successes of your subject.
6. Prepare an Oral Presentation with visual aids on your subject for U.S. History.
7. Practice skills on ExPan for personal record, resume, career choices, and post-secondary training in American Lit/Writing.
8. Prepare a composition "Choosing a Path" for American Lit/Writing:
 - Your beginnings
 - Your turning points, influences, people who have made the difference for you.
 - Your successes and skills.
 - Your goals and career interests.

Suggested American Lit/Writing Schedule:

Options: Special Guest from DeVry Institute will speak on Career Choices
Inspirational movies: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman
Read packet of short literature selections regarding choices.

Read biography/autobiography in class and complete group work.

Computer Lab: Use ExPan with counselors

Write personal essay: Choosing a Path.

All eleventh graders are encouraged to attend the Green River Fair Field Trip.

Appendix E
Starting Points: The Roots and Beginnings

1. Write a bibliographic entry of your book.

LaBelle, Patti with Laura B. Randolph. Don't Block the Blessings: Revelations of a Lifetime.
New York: Riverhead Books, 1996

2. Outline the starting point of your subject including birth place and date, historical significance, family background, and major influences. Include a few important quotes from the book, citing the page number for each.

- I. Birth and Hometown

- A. Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1. Elmwood
 2. "close-knit, mostly black, working-class community out near the airport" (19)

- B. Time: May 24, 1944

- II. Family Background

- A. Loving, caring, Parents

1. Henry Holte, Jr.: Baldwin Locomotive employee
 - a) Bertha "Chubby" Holte: served food at St. Agnes Hospital

- B. Birth Order

1. Fourth of five children, born Patricia Louise and called "Patsy"
 2. Two older half-siblings, two siblings from the same parents as hers

- C. Parents started fighting when she was twelve (father was gambling, womanizing)

1. "They (the fights) shook me hard and deep, way down to my very center, my core. I became a nervous wreck" (33)

- III. Lessons learned

1. "... it's never too late to start over" (36)
 2. "I was a twelve-year-old daddy's girl who had lost her daddy, and a lot of herself in the process" (37).

- IV. Other Significant Influences

- A. Molested by her mother's boyfriend

- B. Escaped into Music

1. "It was there, singing in my mirror, that I came to understand the power of music. A healing power. A bonding power. A power that rises up from deep down inside" (45).
 2. Influenced by black female singers who sang R&B
 3. Church background: Beulah Baptist Church Young Adult Choir
 - a) "I loved gospel music, all right. But it was Mrs. Chapman's gentle encouragement and support that really made me feel at ease" (49).
 - b) Became the church soloist
 4. High School teachers put in her talent show and in a night club
 5. "What if I had given up after the first song? I would never have known that I could do it. I wonder if I would ever have tried again" (69)

Appendix F

Turning Points: Significant Changes, Crises, Career Beginnings

3. Outline the major turning points, crises, and career beginnings of your subject. Who and what made the difference for this person?
 - I. The Golden Age of Female Vocal Groups
 - A. "As songwriter Gerry Goffin has said, 'In the sixties, God was a young black girl who could sing' " (73).
 - B. Hooked up with three high school classmates
 1. "'You kids have potential, but you need a lot of work,' (their manager said) 'If you follow my rules, rehearse long and hard with my people, I'll put you on my show'" (76).
 2. Four girls formed the "Ordettes" after the Orchid Ballroom, 1961
 - C. Dropped out of high school one semester before graduation
 1. "As an adult, not having that diploma did a number on my head many times. Frankly, it often made me feel insecure, sometimes downright inferior. As a teenager, though, I couldn't see that far down the road. All I cared about was the moment" (64).
 2. "... when I was in my thirties, I went back to Bartram High to finish what I started; to get the one thing that fame and fortune couldn't give me: my high school diploma" (86).
 - II. The Beginning of Fame
 - A. Ordettes became the Bluebelles, four young female singers/best friends
 - B. "That was the magic in our friendship - the shared belief that stardom was our destiny" (91).
 - C. They earned very little money and ate poorly
 - III. Racism and prejudice were new to Patti until the 60's
 - A. Motels and restaurants did not allow blacks
 - B. Ku Klux Klan chased them
 - C. Harold B. Robinson, record company president, would not listen to them when he saw they were black
 1. "'That lead singer,' he told Mo, 'she's too dark and too plain.' And everybody knew that a plain black girl couldn't sell records" (94).
 2. Mo convinced him to listen to one song and Robinson signed them on
 3. Robinson changed Patsy Holte's name to LaBelle, French for "the beautiful." The man who rejected me on sight became the one to name me 'beautiful'" (95).
 - IV. Manipulated and Exploited
 - A. Robinson had recorded and released "Junkman" by another girl
 - B. She learned about the other side of the music business: money and control.
 - V. Romance
 - A. Conflicting schedules kept her from marriages until 1969
 - B. "There are turning points in everyone's life, though we usually don't recognize them until later. ...Armstead would always be a part of my life" (114).

Appendix G

Successes and Setbacks: Handling Conflicts, Losses, and Success

4. Outline major setbacks and successes of your subject.

I. Setbacks, Losses, and the Stress of Change

- A. Conflict within the Bluebelles
 - 1. One singer left to join The Supremes
 - 2. "Holding on to anger and resentment is a waste of time and energy" (136).
- B. By 1969 the Bluebelles had hit rock bottom
- C. Group changed name to Labelle and began touring as opening for The Who
- D. Surprised by pregnancy at age 28
 - 1. Baby boy Zuri (meaning "beautiful" in Swahili)
 - 2. All of her singing partners were single and childless, making her singing schedule challenging
- E. Family deaths
 - 1. Mother died
 - 2. Shocked by sister's lung cancer in 1972
 - 3. All three of her sisters died of cancer before the age of forty-four
- F. Labelle began a reputation for political statements about blacks and women
 - 1. Censored on the Michael Douglas Show
- G. Labelle broke up: the team collapsed with exhaustion and personal problems
- H. Depression and Heavy Drinking
- I. Paralyzing Fear of Death
 - 1. Escaped in work
 - 2. Found consolation in singing

II. Successes

- A. Began a solo career
- B. Earned eight Grammy nominations
- C. Earned three Emmy nominations
- D. Won 1992 Grammy Award for Best R&B Vocal performance

III. Lessons learned at 50

- A. "Once I stopped dwelling on what I didn't have, on what I thought I was going to lose, and began to give freely, everything opened up for me. Everything began to flow into my life" (279).
- B. "No matter how bad it might seem, there is a lesson in the experience to make us stronger" (280).

"This is not about dates, times, and places. It's about experience, about acceptance. It's about sinking below, rising above, giving up and going on" (9).

Appendix H

American Lit/Writing Overview: Choosing a Path

Assignment:

1. Read and discuss American literature which focuses on choices and on work.
2. Listen to contemporary music on the subject of work.
3. Watch and discuss an inspirational biography or autobiographical movie.
4. Write journal reflections about people you know and on your own personal experience.
5. After reading the biography assigned in U.S. History and practicing skills on the ExPan program, write a personal essay about Choosing a Path.

Objectives:

1. To reflect on issues of decision-making about our career choices.
2. To read and discuss what others have said about their roots, decision-making process, setbacks, and successes.
3. To practice skills of gathering information about ourselves, our college choices, and possible career interests through the use of the ExPan program.
4. To practice Six-Trait Writing skills in composing a personal essay on Choosing Path.

Personal Essay: Choosing a Path

After reading a biography of someone who has impacted American culture, short classics on the subject of choices and work, and practicing skills on ExPan, write a personal essay on "Choosing a Path." Trace your own roots, decision-making process, setbacks, successes, interests, and goals. Identify post-high school plans and careers of interest.

Suggested American Lit/Writing Schedule:

Read biography/autobiography in class and complete group work.

Use worksheet on four areas of focus:

1. Starting point/Roots.
2. Turning points/Decision-making/Crises faced.
3. Tracing Setbacks.
4. Plotting Successes.

Computer Lab: Use ExPan for personal record, college choices, and career interests.

Write Career Path personal essay.

All eleventh graders are encouraged to attend Green River Career Fair

Appendix I

Writing to Learn Activities for The Pathways Biography Unit

Sample Journal Reflections from (Goode & Bingham, 1991) and (Johnson & LaRocca (1997):

1. Think about the men and women at work right now in America. There are people on the job at all times of the day and night, performing thousands of different tasks. What kinds of jobs come to mind when you think about work? (I Hear America Singing, Walt Whitman)
2. Have you ever wanted to give up on a dream or seeking the life you wanted because you thought life was unfair? Perhaps you have a handicap, grew up in poverty, made a poor choice that hurt you in some way. Maybe you don't feel like you are in the mainstream of society. ("Mother to Son" Langston Hughes)
3. Mark Twain gave this advice about careers: "Make your vocation your vacation." Explain what you think he meant. (Read "Lego" from The New Yorker magazine).
4. Do you believe that having plenty of money would solve all your problems? Can money really make you happy? Are people who are wealthy happier than people of moderate means? (Richard Cory, E.A. Robinson)
5. Is there an issue that you feel passionate about? Maybe it's something that, every time you hear about it in the news, you wish you could do something to help improve the situation. Write about this issue, and include steps you could take to be part of the solution. (I Have a Dream, Martin Luther King, Jr.)
6. Think about a star athlete that you know or have known. What is special about him/her? How is this person treated? Would you like to trade places with him/her? (Ex-Basketball Player, John Updike).

7. Ask at least five adults about how they selected their careers. Did parents steer them in this direction, was their entrance into this occupation self-directed, or was it purely accidental? Were their parents a help or a hindrance in determining their future? ("Two Kinds" from The Joy Luck Club, Amy Tan).
8. Each day you make many decisions. Some are small, and some may have serious consequences. What important decisions have influenced your own or your family's life? How would your life or your family's life be changed had a decision been different? (The Road Not Taken, Robert Frost).
9. How do you know if you are making a sound decision? ("I Can't Accept Not Trying, Michael Jordan).
10. Imagine yourself as the parent of a teenager. Write how you would help your son or daughter move toward a bright future. What do you wish for your child and how will you help your child achieve success?

Appendix J

Choosing a Path Personal Essay Assignment

Directions: Write an essay about the influences that have shaped who you are today and your interests and skills that lead you to one or two career choices.

Suggested Organization: Use each of the five questions below to create a topic sentence with supporting examples for your essay.

Paragraph one: **How has your family background contributed to your identity today?**

Focus on one or two influences such as where you have lived, your birth order, or what you have learned from your early years that affect your decision-making today. Try to look for the good that has been learned from your starting point.

Paragraph two: **Who or what has made a difference for you?** Identify one or two people who have helped you find direction in life. Name one or two events that have caused you to think about what you enjoy doing.

Paragraph three: **What activities and skills do you enjoy doing now?** Consider what you are good at doing: working with people, with ideas, with objects, or a combination. Identify some areas where you have experienced a certain amount of satisfaction or success.

Paragraph four: **Which careers interest you at this point in your life?** What training is necessary to obtain these goals? Please do not feel restricted to identifying one particular career but rather an area of interest that might lead to a career. Use the hand-out on WOIS, ExPan, the KUDER test results, and any journal reflections that help you pinpoint your career interests.

Paragraph five: **What did you learn about decision-making from the person you read about in your biography?** What did you learn in general from this biography that might affect your own decision-making or career choice?

Appendix K

Criteria for Choosing a Path Personal Essay

Voice and Word Choice: Your writing reflect your involvement in the topic. Your interest in what you are saying sounds convincing and unique to your own individuality. An effort was made at selecting words that make a difference in your writing, creating pictures in the reader's mind.

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Organization: Your writing stays focused on one subject with a clear structure to the essay.

10 9 8 7 6 5

Ideas: You have developed the focus with enough examples to explain the questions adequately. An effort was made to use transitional expressions to connect ideas: for example, consequently, as a result, therefore, however, on the other hand, and finally. **Length: Two pages typed, doublespaced.**

30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20

Conventions: An effort is shown in using correct sentence structure, spelling, and usage.

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Process: Your drafts indicate effort in revising your first writing of the essay.

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Score and Comments:

Appendix L

**Evaluation of the Eleventh Grade Biography Unit 1996-1997
Auburn Riverside High School**

Please provide thoughtful consideration to the following questions in order to revise the unit for next year. Your insights, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Use the back side if necessary.

Circle your title: Student Teacher Counselor Librarian Administrator
Parent

Were the following objectives met for you? Yes No

- To read a biography of someone who impacted American culture.
- To synthesize information about career choices in a personal essay.
- To provide guidance for senior scheduling and career decisions through the following tools: counselor visits to the classroom and use of the computer programs WOIS and ExPan.

Reading and Outlining the Biography:

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

The Oral Presentation:

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

Writing the personal essay.

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

KUDER /CFAS testing and de-briefing:

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

WOIS and ExPan exercise in post-secondary choices for training and careers:

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

Scheduling week with the counselors:

-Comments and Suggestions for change:

Please grade the effectiveness of this unit for you. Circle one.

A (Superior) B (Above Average) C (Average) D (Below Average) F (Failure)