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Embedding Story in the Common Core

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by

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Chapter 1

Problem Statement

With the implementation of the Common Core Standards, rigor is focused on setting students up for success in college and the workplace, the era of nonfiction texts has been ushered into the classroom. For many English Language Arts educators, this shift signals the end of relevance for literary fiction, with which they have a great wealth of experience. It also signals a devaluation of narrative writing because there is no place for imaginative storytelling in preparation for college and career experiences. Students are expected to graduate from high school with an expertise in the navigation of articles, manuals, textbooks, primary historical documents, and other texts that provide a factual basis for learning, whether through introducing and explaining a topic or making an argument. The skills necessary to navigate these texts successfully include citing textual evidence to substantiate a claim, identifying and analyzing the central idea of a text, and determining the figurative, connotative, and technical meaning of words and phrases throughout a text (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010).

The devaluation of narrative writing and reading is hurtful to successful educational practices because a curriculum focused on nonfiction texts disengages students, which fails to equip them with a framework for comprehension. The best writing, whether it is narrative or informational, employs some narrative structure. It engages many readers in a unique way that

factual reporting cannot, because readers become invested in the storytelling rather than simply skimming a text for the key informative points (Newkirk, 29).

Significance of Problem

The introduction of these rigorous standards may be complicating teachers' views of their own professional identity. The requirement to abandon what they know, value and prioritize about their content and educational practices to cover a set of externally imposed standards will be reflected in their professional identity or new lack thereof. A study conducted by Rob Montgomery analyzed how teachers of varied experiences balanced the importance of professional identity against the importance of Common Core Standards when lesson-planning. The results showed that teachers looked first to what aligned with their professional identities, such as student engagement, before they considered which standards to appease. One teacher in the study, referred to as Leah, made very clear her stance on standard-based planning:

> I cannot simplify the teaching of English by saying 'Today we're doing this standard and this standard.' That's not gonna happen. Because it's much more complex than that. And I think there's a problem with some newer teachers who think that they can't do some of the richer things because they are so concerned about teaching standards (52)

The preservation of professional identity is an exceptionally complicated issue for teachers when standards-based expectations are introduced. Whether a teacher places value on student engagement, fiction texts, or narrative writing, it is clear that maintaining professional identity will preserve rich teaching methods.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a unit that addresses literary nonfiction standards while supporting them by fostering a dynamic understanding of narrative reading and writing throughout. Thomas Newkirk argues that although the importance of narrative is downplayed in the new set of rigorous educational standards, "nonfiction is all about plot" (29).

This unit can be divided into three sections. The first section utilizes the Common Core document itself as the ultimate informational text, riddled with facts in organized fashion, but completely lacking any narrative structure. Students will experiment with concepts in this section, including the value of narrative structure to make documents more readable. The second section of the unit will focus on writing found in newspapers and articles, creating a transition to more narrative-based informational texts. The final section of the unit is focused around Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* and other nonfiction texts that discuss the process of writing and being a writer. In this way, students develop the skills necessary to navigate an informational text, and just as important, they work with content dedicated to narrative power, and realize the impact it has on reading and writing. The goal of this unit is to engage students in critical thinking about the parity and cohesiveness of narrative and informational structure in writing. This will be accomplished and displayed through a project-based assessment, collecting student work over the course of the unit into a portfolio.

Rationale

Stories are readable. It is human nature to crave stories as a means of digesting information. While it is true that informational texts are more prevalent in college and career experiences, the informational texts worth reading benefit when students apply skills learned

through mastering the narrative structure. Many students are readily able to locate the bolded terms and read the captioned pictures in a textbook, but it is unlikely that they will read an entire chapter, except for a few anecdotes that reinforce ideas presented elsewhere in the text. It is these stories that create a motor with which readers can move forward.

Narrative writing also has a place, albeit underutilized, in professional development. K. Attard argues that reflective narrative writing in the professional realm helps push boundaries and think outside the box for new solutions. "I see writing as a way of thinking that helps me in understanding myself; my own actions; my thoughts; my emotions; my experiences" (Attard, 163). This employment of narrative writing takes a step away from the dry reporting of facts to allow the writing to take over and ideas flow freely. In fact, Attard attests, at a certain point it is no longer the writer in control of the ideas on the page but the act of writing itself, allowing for reflection, speculation, prediction, and other thoughts important for creative problem-solving (166). If narrative writing substantively contributes to professional goals, then teaching it in high school English classrooms is consistent with the overall purposes of the recent educational policy reforms.

Definition of Terms

Informational Texts: texts, print, digital or otherwise, that provide factual information in any form.

Literary Nonfiction: a type of informational text that employs narrative structure and literary elements, such as biographies, memoirs, and personal essays.

Text Complexity: the level of difficulty associated with reading a specific text. Common Core defines this level by considering three factors: qualitative, quantitative, and reader-task considerations.

Domain-Specific Words and Phrases: tier three words as classified by the Common Core Standards that apply specifically to a certain content, and would be difficult to use outside of that content.

General Academic Words and Phrases: tier two words as classified by the Common Core Standards that can be used in any academic setting.

Narrative Structure: writing about an event or topic in a personal way, with the structure of a story

Source: a text whose use is mainly for informational purposes, such as research

Summary

The push for informational reading and writing in the classroom has the potential to increase student literacy as needed for college and career skills. However, these skills are dull without a command of narrative structure with which to engage readers. If the purpose of Common Core classrooms is to genuinely engage students with informational texts and not simply to practice skimming skills, narrative structure must be present to drive student reading motors forward. This type of narratively structured informational text is found most often in literary nonfiction. Most beautifully, this symbiotic relationship in writing is found when writers write about writing. Memoirs on the craft of writing showcase how narrative structure can turn information about writing into a dynamically engaging text.

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

The Research

As the Common Core Standards loom over American education, teachers are trying to understand the new expectations in order to modify their teaching accordingly. So what changes need to be made? What changes apply just to English Language Arts teachers and what changes are to be spread out over multiple disciplines?

More important to this project is the face of the ELA curriculum. What will this look like? How will it be different? The abundance of research on this subject features many different perspectives and offers many varying solutions, but there are a number of trends worth noting. Most authors writing about the Common Core shifts in ELA support the standards and what they represent. One of the most notable shifts, the focus on informational texts, is received positively but with warning that the current path may lead to the elimination of fiction in the classroom, which would be detrimental. So now that these demands for informational text-based curricula have fallen to teachers, how do we make it work?

"Common Core and Literary Nonfiction: Now What Do I Do?"

For many teachers, putting literary nonfiction into practice in the classroom is a serious change of pace, but most would agree that it has value. Robyn Young aims to define the expectations of literary nonfiction in the Common Core Standards. The article defines literary nonfiction very broadly, stating that "almost everything that is a true account is included in literary nonfiction" (Young). The article also argues that students who gravitate towards

nonfiction on their own tend to be more successful in school. No research for this argument is

provided, but the author supplies anecdotal information about her daughter.

Another issue addressed in this article is the heightened text complexity and

comprehension expectation by the Common Core Standards. "Too often students aren't required

to read their textbooks or an article, but are expected to skim the reading selection based on a

search for answers to rudimentary questions." In this way, students are not expected to know,

understand, or even ask questions about the material, but instead showcase that they can spot key

words when looking to answer a specific question. Other highlights from this article include

methods for full digestion of informational texts like providing portions of books and articles

rather than whole works.

"Common Core: Fact vs. Fiction"

Kim Greene highlights the positive aspects of informational texts in the classroom and

how to use them in an interesting, meaningful way. Greene argues that the focus on informational

texts is especially key in elementary grades. Students at this level "are naturally curious" and

"nonfiction helps quench their thirst for answers" (Greene). However, this curiosity and 'thirst'

for knowledge about the world around them is stunted by the overwhelming presence of fiction.

The Common Core Standards assert that informational texts are much more valuable than

fictional literature because they are more representative of what students will encounter in

college and careers. Because of this view, informational texts will account for no less than fifty

percent of the curricula for elementary grades, increasing with each grade level.

Informational texts will be more engaging in 21st century classrooms because they will not simply be textbooks. They will be from "websites, blogs, and magazines." Erin Klein, a second grade elementary teacher interviewed for this article argues that "by introducing students to print-rich materials and digital media, we are shaping an authentic experience for the way they take in information" (Greene).

Other highlights in this article include an in-depth look at the standards themselves. Greene attempts to analyze the given definition for informational texts, as do many other articles published in the wake of the introduction of the standards. Defining informational texts clearly is paramount as it will likely mean new curriculum writing for most teachers. This article, among others, makes the important distinction that literary nonfiction has a narrative structure and often employs a number of literary devices, but does so with actual events and facts. Literary nonfiction includes but is not limited to biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and personal essays. The broader category of informational texts refers to anything that students are reading for the information it contains.

"Districts Gear Up For Shift to Informational Texts"

This article, by Catherine Gewertz, puts a focus on the response to Common Core's call for nonfiction texts by teachers and districts.

Gewertz, like many other authors discussing the Common Core, analyzes nonfiction texts and how to teach them properly. In an interview for the article, educator Sarah Brown Wessler said, "often, our nod to nonfiction is the autobiography but there's a real gap in other kinds of nonfiction. Students understand how to read fiction with a beginning, middle, and

end" (Gewertz). The argument is that most worthy informational texts do not read according to the fiction formula (although literary nonfiction, which is named in the Common Core as a necessity, does tend to have a narrative structure). Books like *Nickeled and Dimed* require a different reading approach. "We spend a lot of time talking about attributes of nonfiction, like how to read an interview, or how to tell the difference between fact and opinion."

Other highlights in this article include a look at the response by educational publishers to meet these new classroom needs, and a look at school budgets that, for the most part, cannot afford the changes they must undertake.

Gewertz's article contributes to this project by offering a lens into classrooms and display the reality of these standards in the classroom.

"Driving the Reading Act: Shifting Between the Aesthetic and Efferent Stance When Approaching Informational Texts in the Common Core Era"

This article, by Melissa Parenti, proposes a means for better digestion of informational texts by students in the classroom. Parenti argues that the most frequent (and least effective) approach to informational texts is to have students skim for certain information, completely missing the text as whole work (efferent stance). This approach does not foster the kind of literacy that students develop when reading fiction, allowing them to develop opinions, concerns and questions. Parenti urges educators to accomplish this aesthetic stance in reading with informational as well as fictional texts. It is important that students not just be taught how to pick specific information from a large body of text, but rather, read a text in its entirety and develop opinions, ask questions, and think critically about close readings.

Parenti's article contributes to this project by providing researched support for the foundational approach to reading in this literary nonfiction-based curriculum.

"Informational Texts And The Common Core Standards: What Are We Talking About, Anyway?"

This article, by Beth Maloch, takes an in-depth look at informational texts as seen by the Common Core. Specifically in elementary grades, students are not provided enough informational texts at an age where they thirst for answers about the world around them. At the end of the article, a bulleted list of research-based claims are provided for teachers, along with the research behind them, so that they can successfully defend how and what they teach, in regard to informational texts.

The article also includes a focused review of available research, helping the authors to adequately define informational texts, as they apply to the Common Core classroom. "...fiction and nonfiction are not genres; rather, they denote a binary about referentiality to the world...Inside nonfiction you find narratively structured genres like biographies and historical narrative; you also find genres structured by exposition, like arguments, explanations, and articles packed with facts" (Maloch). This is an important distinction to make within the umbrella of nonfiction, because narratively structured informational texts provide an avenue for teachers of ELA that far less delineated from the original structure of the fiction-based curriculum, but still provides ample opportunity for students to work with various types of informational texts.

"Linking Learning and Literary Nonfiction"

This article, by Rebecca Morris, approaches the nonfiction era being ushered into education from the librarian perspective. According to Morris, "the emphasis on informational texts stands out as one of the most obvious ways for librarians to contribute to implementing the Standards."

This article, like most others on the topic, takes a stab at defining informational texts, but more specifically for ELA classrooms, literary nonfiction. It is easier for Morris and colleagues to define what literary fiction is not, rather than what it is. It is not a book or article comprised of simply factual information. It is not a series of books describing animals, machines, and other categories including historical. "Literary nonfiction is not especially helpful for topical research, because it's more like a story, readable from beginning to end" (Morris). She goes on to further clarify literary fiction by citing an article from *English Journal* about successfully engaging teens in reading and writing of contemporary memoirs: "...they are not only well-researched accounts of real events or experiences, but also artful narratives. They employ literary techniques and often inject uncertainties and rumination into their factual texts" (Kirby&Kirby).

"New Literacies and the Common Core"

This article, by William Kist, is aimed at highlighting new ways that students can read and write, that allow them to better interact with the world, and also align with the Common Core Standards. Kist offers four powerful strategies that do not initially come to mind, when thinking of texts in the classroom.

The first strategy that Kist offers is to give students practice with screen-based texts. This makes sense for a set of standards whose main purpose is to help students succeed in college and careers, where the majority of reading they will do will take place on a computer screen. However, Kist's argument is slightly different than this assumption. He argues that since students will be doing most of their reading and writing on a screen, it makes sense to introduce them to non-print texts, like videos, music, and visual art. By beginning with close readings of these non-print texts, students develop basic concepts that translate to traditional informational texts.

The second strategy calls for students to practice digital writing. Kist claims that writing for the digital world is an entirely different animal than page-based writing. There are new skills, like know when it will give your message added meaning to include a hyperlink to further information, or what fonts and graphics will do to your writing. These are all skills that are lost to writing written to be printed. An example for students given in the article is to create a multi-media autobiography, using pictures, videos, writing, and music to tell their life stories. Deciding how to use each different type of text and how they will work together will enhance their understanding of how informational texts work.

The third strategy centers around collaborative writing. The world has been gradually shrinking as the digital era has grown, providing in part, plenty of educational opportunity. One such opportunity is collaborative writing. In keeping with the main focus of the Common Core Standards, an important characteristic in the workforce as well as in college is to be able to work collaboratively. Kist offers a number of different projects and programs that have been put together to allow classrooms to link up with other classrooms around the world to create texts together. One such project is Flat Classroom. It is "an example of how international student-to-

student projects often center on students creating texts together. One classroom, for example, may provide raw footage that students have shot related to an assigned topic. Another classroom half a world away may then take that raw footage and edit it into a meaningful video" (Kist).

The final strategy is the most obvious: give students practice with informational texts. It seems simple, but it is most effective when thoughts come from outside the box. This project, for example, will have students look closely at literary nonfiction focused on the art of being a writer. It would be an opportunity missed if students were not actively engaging with current blogs and other forms of informational texts from contemporary writers.

"Research Says"

This article, by Bryan Goodwin and Kirsten Miller, sets up a contrast between fiction and nonfiction reading, and the value of both. The authors offer complete support of the change in expectations set forth by the Common Core Standards. Students' reading habits outside of school are vastly important to their development of literacy skills, and Goodwin and Miller present researched evidence that students who tend to read more nonfiction than fiction show improved oral reading fluency (Goodwin & Miller).

The second argument made in this article is that teaching will have to change in response to this new focus on informational texts. "One English teacher who taught a unit on the influence of media on teenagers said that she had previously had her students cite just one source for their papers; this year she had them read multiple sources, including surveys, newspaper columns, and a 4/200 magazine article by Nicholas Carr titled 'Is Google Making Us Stupid?'" (Goodwin & Miller, 2013).

"Ten Essentials for Teaching Informational Texts"

This article, by Barbara Moss, provides ten essential pieces of advice to teachers looking to integrate informational texts into their curriculum, as the title promises. The first piece of advice is not to lump all informational-style texts under a non-narrative terminology. Clarity on specific text types is key, according to Moss.

The second piece of advice, transitioning from the first, is that students need practice with all the varying types of informational texts, as they all hold value in preparing students for college and careers. This holds especially true for primary-grade children, who often only have fiction available to them. This is a problem that needs to be addressed in the teaching decisions of elementary staff, as well as the collection of books in the library.

The third piece of advice is that teachers need to instruct for comprehension specific to each separate type of text. "Reading comprehension is genre-dependent; in other words, the reading processes used to comprehend a story like *Charlotte's Web* are different than from those needed to extract information from an article on spiders" (Moss, 2013).

The article continues with seven other valuable views on informational text in the classroom and how it can be used successfully.

"Three Important Words: Students Choose Vocabulary To Build Comprehension Of Informational Text"

This article, by Peter Fisher, looks closely at student ability to comprehend what they read and what teachers can do to improve comprehension levels. Fisher takes an interesting approach to students who struggle to chunk and summarize texts, and outlines a specific strategy that can be utilized in the classroom. The strategy breaks down to the following: First, students read an informational article broken into excerpts. The author mentions that the informational articles he used were from National Geographic, because they appealed to the students' interests. Next, students, with support from the teacher, select three words from the excerpt that best represent the main idea of the reading. Then, they must choose the best of the three words to represent the main idea. Once this is accomplished, students turn the three words they chose into sentences summarizing what they read.

The article continues to provide support for helping students summarize and comprehend informational reading, and then relate back to the Common Core Standards: "As we begin to incorporate the Common Core State Standards, it is critical that we provide students with additional strategies, especially struggling readers. The expectation to read, comprehend, and write about increasingly complex textsÃ¢â‚¬Â¦ may prove to be a struggle for some" (Fisher, 2013).

"Developing a Pedagogical-Technical Framework to Improve Creative Writing"

This article, by Stephanie Chong, discusses the benefits of using 21st century literacy technologies with creative writing to improve literacy. Furthermore, Chong argues that there are not enough technologies developed that scaffold learning in creative writing.

My project relies heavily on creative writing as a powerful educational force. This article, with others, reinforces this assertion. Chong's foundational principles are based on Merill's First Principles of Instruction, that state that learning is promoted when background knowledge is activated for the learner, information is displayed for the learner, the learner applies the knowledge, and the learner incorporates the knowledge into their world.

"How We Really Comprehend Nonfiction"

This article, by Thomas Newkirk, creates an argument essential for this product: that quality nonfiction writing, the kind that is read in full and not just skimmed and chunked, is actually narrative writing masquerading as informational.

Newkirk sets out to prove in this article that for informational texts to be engaging and not just a keyword search, it must have at its core, elements of narrative. "Reading is not a treasure hunt for the main idea; it's a journey we take with a writer" (Newkirk, 2012). This journey is generally taken under the umbrella of fiction, however the same magic can be represented in nonfiction, as mandated by the Common Core Standards.

When the general reader thinks of informational texts, they think of pieces like textbooks, which demonstrate a complete lack of narrative structure at any level. Do you remember a time when you read a textbook thoroughly and with full engagement, or just skimmed for the bits you need? Newkirk claims that textbooks are essentially glorified glossaries, introducing a few new terms each page. The Common Core Standards require a full reading of nonfiction texts, not just the ability to skim texts for certain bits. This is why it is important to seek out nonfiction that

moves its writing forward with narrative elements. This is a practice that should also be reflected in student writing.

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Narrative Writing's Role in the Informational Text

By Mike Neumire

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Unit Overview

One of the main considerations for this unit, and the reasoning behind its creation, is to strengthen student understanding of informational texts through narrative structure.

Informational texts are the focus of the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts, and they include a broad range of writing, stipulating only that they provide factual information.

This unit will improve students' understanding of narrative and informative structures in writing, and how they can work together. It will focus completely on the reading and writing of informational texts, and will involve extensive practice with both.

The unit will break down to three main sections. The first section will include a week studying the Common Core Standards document as an informational text. The second section will analyze informational texts and narrative structure in the realm of newspapers, including student creation of newspaper articles. The third section is devoted to close readings of Stephen King's *On Writing,* and its role in the world of informational texts.

Assessment Overview

The assessment for this unit will be driven by its goals. This project-based assessment will focus on the writing objectives set forth for students by the Common Core Standards. Through various rich writing project, students will demonstrate an understanding of the types and purposes of writing in various settings. The Common Core Standards expect that students in high school will be able to make claims and support them through writing, explore complex ideas through informative, organized writing, and to write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences. The purpose of this unit is to demonstrate that the development of real experiences through narrative writing will improve the readability and power of an informational text, and the assessment will reflect such.

The project-based assessment for this unit will be a portfolio of student writing, culminating with a choice of projects, all designed to have students think deeply about what they've learned throughout the unit. They may choose between a traditional paper, a presentation, a video presentation, or a newspaper article involving a number of interviews. The specifications of each project boil down to a student synthesis of their gained knowledge throughout the unit.

Essential Questions

1. What makes a text readable?

2. Why are stories popular forms of communication?

3. How can information be spread effectively?

Pre-assessment

In order to gain an understanding of individual writing skills possessed by each student, a writing pre-assessment is necessary. It is necessary because individual progress must be measured. While the hope would be that each student would be able to meet the rigorous benchmark standards set by the Common Core, each student is an individual with individual capabilities, and the most important result of this unit is that each student moves forward from where they began. This is important not only because students who do not reach the benchmarks must show evidence that they did make progress, but students who do reach the benchmarks may reach them easily and therefore become complacent in the classroom. If they are measured based on the progress they make from their pre-assessment, they will be motivated more deeply from a personal place.

The pre-assessment for this unit will relate directly to the summative assessment and the student learning objectives. Students will be asked to write, in the form of a college essay, detailing the five most important qualities of a successful student. For each quality, a brief personal narrative highlighting that quality's importance must be provided. This pre-assessment will be evaluated based on a [Common Core- aligned rubric created by Turnitin.](#)

This pre-assessment is designed to establish a base performance level for each student's ability to write informatively, argumentatively, and narratively. It is designed to resemble an authentic writing purpose, that is immediately relevant to the age group.

1st Lesson Plan- Standards

Objectives/Goals

Students will be able to understand and paraphrase the Common Core Standards expectations for

ELA, as well as articulate their opinions through argumentative writing on whether these

expectations will prepare them for college.

Materials/Resources

Dictionaries

Computer lab

Highlighters

Common Core handout

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/

p12_common_core_learning_standards_ela.pdf

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/common-core-in-action-narrative-writing-heather-wolpert-gawron

Anticipatory Set

Students will be provided dictionaries and take part in a dictionary battle. A dictionary battle

works like this: students pair up and open their dictionaries. They are informed that they have to

find ten words they've never heard of (must be appropriate) and then their partner must use those

ten words to write a 100-word story. The object of this activity is that students will find some of

the silliest words possible, and give them a sense of discovery within the pages of a dictionary.

Direct Instruction

Students will transition from the dictionary activity to a discussion about the new Common Core

Standards (academic vocab vs. domain-specific, etc). after a brief discussion on the new

implications of the standards, the class will be split in half. One half will receive the actual

standards, for ELA specifically. The other half will receive two articles: one in support of the

standards and one against them. Both will receive a graphic organizer to help break down main

ideas and supporting evidence. At the end of each graphic organizer will be a set of questions:

1. What do you know now about expectations of you that you did not know before?

2. What do you think is the best way to address these standards in the classroom?

3. *Are these expectations reasonable? Why or why not?*

4. *What would make this document easier to understand?*

Students will have the opportunity to share their answers with the class, followed by a discussion with each group so that the other group can hear and compare.

Guided Practice

At computers, students will be asked to find a new article about the CCS, print it, read it, and highlight it so that they can give a brief summary to the teacher as they float around the room. This unit will be preceded by a brief research paper unit, where the conventions of research and citation will have been initially covered. This unit will reinforce the previous.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write one anonymous question they have or can think of about the material covered for the day. The teacher will select a couple questions to address to start the next day.

Independent Practice

Independent practice throughout this unit will be comprised of an online section of the class, including discussion blog posts, replies, and work with video lectures and powerpoints. This practice is a direct reflection of the Common Core Standards' focus on college preparation. A rising trend for colleges is to offer classes online, which needs representation in the high school arena. Especially in the case of teacher education classes online, a format for presentation and engagement is modeled for new teachers to use in high school classrooms. Lane Clark and Lenore Kinne argue in their article, "More than Words: Investigating the Format of Asynchronous Discussions as Threaded Discussions or Blogs," that pressure sits squarely on the shoulders of teacher educators to provide a model by teaching their classes in a way that translates directly to the high school classroom. "Teacher educators must be cognizant of the reality that the instructional strategies they implement are serving as models of instruction for the teacher candidates in their courses" (4).

The reverse of teacher candidates using online classes as a model when teaching high school means that high school classrooms provide opportunity for students to prepare for and transition to college by building the necessary digital literacy skills to be successful in an online format. Online classes use discussion boards as a means of creating student discussion despite a lack of face-to-face interaction. High school provides the luxury of required attendance, which

means that class time can be boiled down to a mixture of face-to-face interaction and time on the computer. In this way, students who excel can move forward at a comfortable pace, and students who struggle with format and/or content can receive guidance from the teacher as they progress.

In this unit, discussion posts and replies will take a central role in independent practice. The specific posts will relate to the lesson in which they reside, and students will generally have to create one post, whether it be a critical thinking question or an example of their work. They will also generally post one reply to another student's discussion post. They will be expected to evaluate their posts, their reply, and the post to which they reply. A rubric is provided for students to use as a model for their evaluation. Unlike peer editing, which can often be troublesome depending on the individual classroom, peer evaluation provides a concrete rubric to base grades on, and asks to evaluate self as well as others. According to Lindsey Jesnek of Vincennes University, every type of writer has the potential to be dissatisfied with peer editing. Stronger writers who peer edit with weaker writers feel like they are providing support without receiving support in return. Weaker writers receive more support, but may be confused by comments. When weak writers peer edit together, little is accomplished (19).

For this lesson, students will address the essential question, "what makes a text readable?", providing their best answer. They will evaluate their own post based on a 4-point discussion rubric. They will then comment on one other student's answer to the question, evaluating that post and their own reply.

Example:

Post-

"According to _____, the Common Core Standards expect classrooms to use 30% literature and 70% informational text by 12th grade. What do we get from informational texts that we cannot get from literature?

(4)

Replies-

" (4)

Great question. I think that using more informational text in the classroom is helpful because that's what we will be dealing with in college and in our careers (*citation*). How will knowing about alliteration help a lawyer research and prepare for a court case?

(4)"

	Discussion Rubric
4	-New meaningful subject line (not just RE:...) -Content of post is thoughtful and original -Posts need self-evaluation, replies need peer- and self-evaluation -Reference or weblink your sources -No plagiarism (quote and cite information)
3	-Missing meaningful subject or peer-/self-evaluation -Content of post lacks thoughtfulness -References are improperly cited
2	-Response is opinion only -References are improperly cited
1	-Response is incoherent -No references when necessary

Assessment

Students will be assessed formatively based on their graphic organizers, participation in class, and their blog entries and replies.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1a Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1b Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1c Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1d Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

2nd Lesson Plan - Standards

Goals/Objectives

Students will be able to gather accurate information methodically and present it in an organized, effective manner. Students will be able to differentiate between informational and narrative structures, and provide explanation as to why they prefer one or the other. The essential questions addressed in this unit will be: "*how can information be spread effectively?*"

Materials/Resources

Computers

Highlighters

Anticipatory Set

Students will be split into partners, and prompted to take part in a competition where the goal is to find articles with high mention of specific buzzwords. The two buzzwords, or buzz phrases will be "informational text" and "Common Core Standards." One partner will be in charge of searching for articles that have these buzzwords, printing them off, and passing them to the other partner who will take a yellow highlighter and highlight as many buzzwords he can find. The

students will be informed that the winners will be free of the homework for that night. This activity will lead to a discussion on skimming vs. reading, as well as a continued discussion on the Common Core Standards.

Direct Instruction

Students will read the first section of Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft,* quietly to themselves. When they finish, the teacher will facilitate a discussion on King's use of narrative structure to convey information versus the method for conveying information in the Common Core Standards document. They will receive a handout detailing narrative writing and informative writing, with examples of each and how they are used. To finish the discussion, students will discuss what purposes each type of writing best serve, by creating a Venn diagram.

The handout:

Name_____

Date_____

Narrative Writing vs Informative Writing

For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career- ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing—for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative—to produce complex and nuanced writing. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing.

-The Common Core Standards

Narrative Writing:

relates a clear sequence of events that occurs over time. Both what happens and the order in which the events occur are communicated to the reader. Effective narration requires a writer to give a clear sequence of events (fictional or nonfictional) and to provide elaboration (alsde.edu).

Informational Writing:

writing that is used to convey information (http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ [scholasticprofessional/authors/pdfs/duke_sample_pages.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/scholasticprofessional/authors/pdfs/duke_sample_pages.pdf))

Guided Practice

Now that students have a working understanding of informational writing and narrative writing, students will grab an article that they printed off during the anticipatory set. They will highlight any part they think qualifies as narrative writing, and underline any part they think qualifies as informational writing. The teacher will not specify what to do if writing qualifies as both narrative and informational writing, and wait to see if students come to the question on their own.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, is to write an anonymous question regarding the day's material and submit it to be answered the next day as a class.

Independent Practice

Students will bring home the article they highlighted and post a critical thinking question based on the article and the day's discussions in the student discussion blog area. They must also respond to another student's discussion blog, following the four point discussion rubric provided in the previous lesson.

Assessment

Students will be assessed formatively based on their discussion posts and Venn diagrams.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

3rd Lesson - Standards

Objectives/Goals

Students will be able to collaborate on the analysis of an article, citing quotes from the text to support their analysis. They will be able to summarize the article by finding a central idea and tracking its development. This lesson will address the essential questions: "*what makes a text readable?*" and "*how do we get others to listen?*"

Materials/Resources

Article/reading

highlighter

Anticipatory Set

Students will engage in a discussion based on anonymous questions about the material, submitted the day before. The teacher will select a handful of questions that are particularly relevant to the day, and open them up for discussion. Each day, there will be a designated scribe.

The scribe's job will be to take notes on the class's answers to the questions, type them up, print them out, and post them on the wall with the questions and colored paper.

Direct Instruction

Students will be split into five even groups. Each group will receive a reading to analyze and discuss. Two of the readings will be articles in support of the Common Core Standards, two will be in opposition of the Standards, and one will be a selection from Stephen King's *On Writing.* The groups will be responsible for summarizing, analyzing, and utilizing specific quotes from the readings. When the groups have finished, they will be assigned numbers and split again, so that each new group contains a member from each of the previous groups. These new groups will go around, sharing about each reading. They will be asked to summarize the article, analyze it in terms of writing style and information conveyed, as well as provide a quote from the text that best represents it.

Other students in the group should be taking notes about each article. When groups have finished sharing, the class will reassemble and discuss the features found in the readings that help or hurt their understanding, such as bolded terms, statistics, charts, narrative structure, etc.

The articles (not the Stephen King excerpt) can be found here:

Guided Practice

Students will be asked to come up with a lesson plan centered around one specific standard pulled from the Common Core Standards. The idea of having students create lessons based around the Standards is beneficial in multiple ways. Relating to a study about the effects of lesson planning on student teachers, Edith Lai and Chi-Chung Lam argue that "lesson planning can be conceptualised as the interaction between teachers and particular content in order to arrive at decisions regarding what and how particular content should be delivered" (221). This concept of decision-making for the creation of lessons forces students to prioritize information they have learned, in this case about the Common Core Standards, and synthesize it into a version that can be translated to others. This engagement with the material moves to a level that would not be achieved by just asking students to draft an argument surrounding the Standards.

Students will be instructed to have three components to their lesson plans: an anticipatory set, direct instruction, and assessment. They will be given brief instruction on the lesson planning process. They will be shown that anticipatory sets must find a way to connect students to material, through some type of engaging activity, usually that relates to student experience. Direct instruction is the bulk of the content, but still must be engaging to students. Assessment must provide information to the teacher about student understanding of the material, not just an opportunity to assign a number to a student. Through this type of activity, students will have to think about the most important components of the content and the best way to convey that information to others. This meta approach is important for students to prioritize the content thinking about how they prefer to learn. Students will also be informed that for bonus points, they can find research to support their lesson choices.

Closure

The ticket out the door for this lesson, as always, is for students to write a question having to do with the material covered, to be discussed the next day. Students can write question about any aspect of the lesson, and do not attach their name to the question.

Independent Practice

Students will continue their blog project. They will be required to post a critical thinking question about the best ways to work the Common Core Standards into the lessons that they created. They must evaluate their own question, as well as another's question, reply to that question, and evaluate their reply.

Assessment

Students' lesson plans will be added to their portfolio for this unit. The lesson plans represent a focus on reading and creating informational texts. Students will have an opportunity later in the unit to compare these strictly factual documents they create to ones that include a narrative element.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

4th Lesson - Just the Facts

This marks the stage in this unit that focuses on newspapers and the types of informational and narrative writing that they involve. Students will continue to see how informational texts work with narrative writing to engage with readers. Publishing a class newspaper is one of a number of ways to provide authentic readership for student writing, outside of the traditional teacher-student arrangement. According to Terri Hessler, in addition to student-written letters to community newspapers, creating a class newspaper will "provide student writers with the opportunities to contact real writers" (56).

During this portion of the unit, students will be assigned roles to write for a classroom newspaper, reporting in different facets and learning about what is involved in this type of reporting. Students will also learn briefly about the history of newspapers and their current decline/ transition to digital media. The articles that each student writes for the newspaper will be added to their writing portfolio for the unit.

Objectives/Goals

Students will be able to "write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content" (Common Core Standards 9-10.W.3). Students will be able

to identify and dissect the important features of varying newspaper articles, and recreate them in their own reporting.

Materials/Resources

Newspapers

Highlighters

Computers

Scissors

Glue

Construction paper

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/Printing_Press/

https://docs.google.com/a/u.brockport.edu/document/d/
1ow5bcjHNG3y6LGyTq3ElD4_39QrXazIHk8w8bdInt4c/edit

http://www.slideshare.net/PerpetualRevision/digital-literacy-in-writing-instruction

http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/ncaaf-dr-saturday/muschamp-lashes-local-media-irresponsible-journalism-video-005530779--ncaaf.html

Anticipatory Set

In order to engage students with this lesson, they will begin by creating memes. Memes are expressive photographs, often entertaining, that are paired with a caption that addresses a current issue in a humorous way. Students will each be given a picture having to do a current issue. Their task will be to assign their photo an entertaining caption, cut it out and mount it on construction paper, and hang it on the classroom wall. Students will vote on the most entertaining meme by private ballet. First, second, and third place will be relieved of scribe duty. Once the activity is complete, a transitional discussion will take place on the power of images combined with words, versus words alone or images alone.

Direct Instruction

Students will be given varying newspapers and be instructed to find the most powerful picture within that paper. Each student will be given a chance to briefly present their picture and summarize the information connected to it. Once students have had an opportunity to see these combinations, discussion will shift to digital literacy as a whole. Students will view a [slideshare presentation](#) created by Amy Goodloe, that discusses what digital literacy is and what role it has in the classroom. Students will be prompted to respond critically to the presentation, providing insight from their own experiences with digital literacy and how it can be useful in the classroom.

Guided Practice

Students will be split into groups of three. Each member of each group will receive a picture, about which they must create a fictional news article. They will do so individually and then share with their group. The group must then find a way to alter the stories so that they can become one cohesive news article. The students must enter their article and pictures into the online newspaper template and arrange their work according to a specific format, for a specific effect. They should connect back to previous lessons, and use various article features that they've analyzed previously to enhance their article. This will be followed by a brief discussion on irresponsible reporting.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write down one question about the day's discussions and content covered, and submit it anonymously to be discussed the next day.

Independent Practice

Students will each be given an article from the National Enquirer and this video.

They must post a critical thinking question on their blogs about irresponsible reporting. In addition to their question, they must reply to another student's question, and evaluate both questions and the reply according to the discussion rubric.

Assessment

Assessment to this point in this section of the unit will be formative and based on student involvement with discussion in class and through discussion boards.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1a Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1b Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

5th Lesson - Just the Facts

Objectives/Goals

Students will be able to "work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed" (Common Core Standards SL. 9-10.1B). Students will be able to collaborate to create a newspaper. They will be able to conduct interviews, gather research, and produce articles on specific topics.

Materials/Resources

Computers

Anticipatory Set

To begin this lesson, students will need to be assigned roles. Roles will include sports writing, school politics, current events, entertainment, etc. They will attempt to mirror the different topics covered in a newspaper. The roles will be granted based on a lottery event, which will take place to get the lesson moving. In one bowl, each student will submit their name on a card. In another bowl, the different roles will be submitted. One by one, students will be paired up with roles, and some roles will have multiple students assigned to them, as they will require in-depth focus. The

teacher will be the chief editor, and students must submit proposals for article ideas to the teacher before they can begin.

Direct Instruction

Students will begin by watching this interview with an Alabama newspaper editor. Students will be prompted to answer these questions while they watch the video:

1. How did the man in the interview become the editor of this paper?

2. What does it take to work for a successful paper?

3. What are the best parts of the job listed in this interview?

4. What warnings does this editor give?

5. Do you think this is a credible source of information? Why or why not?

6. What do you think the best part about being a reporter would be?

A discussion based on the interview and questions will follow. After the discussion has wound down, students will read an article about how to successfully conduct an interview.

Guided Practice

After students have become comfortable with the steps provided in the article, they will practice interviewing each other. They will do this by first selecting a partner, whom they will interview and in turn, answer interview questions. Then, they will create a list of five questions centered around a theme or topic they want their interview to represent. They will then take turns interviewing each other, making sure to take detailed notes as they do so. They will then each write two or three paragraphs that string the answers to their questions into a coherent narrative of the interview, using quotes when they would be helpful. Each student will briefly share their "article" with the class.

Closure

The ticket out the door for this lesson, as always, will be for students to record one question they have about the day's material/content/discussions. The question can be to provide information that was missed, or a critical thinking question that brings new perspective to what was already discussed. The questions will be anonymous and the teacher will select a few important ones to bring up to start the next class.

Independent Practice

Students will be sent home with an interview rubric. They will be asked to grade their interviewer based on the rubric's standards, and return the rubric the next class. Students will also be asked to read this article, by Paul Grabowicz. They will then go to their discussion blogs

and post an opinion response or a critical thinking question based on the article. They must

evaluate their post according to the discussion rubric. In addition, they must evaluate another

student's post, and reply to that post. Finally, they must evaluate their own reply.

Assessment

Any and all articles that are student-produced will be submitted to their portfolio for assessment.

In addition, students will be assessed for their speaking and listening skills during the interview

process.

Interview Rubric

	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation before the interview.	No preparation was made.	A few questions were prepared.	An adequate number of questions, most of which relate in some way to the research focus, was prepared.	A comprehensive list of questions relating directly to research focus was prepared.	A comprehensive list of questions and supplementary questions relating directly to research focus was prepared. Background knowledge of the person, if known, was included.

	1	2	3	4	5
Manner	The student interrupted or hurried the person being interviewed and forgot to thank them at the end.	The student made an attempt to be polite. . Listened, and thanked the person at the end of the interview.	The student was polite. Tried to make eye contact and nodded encouragement occasionally. Listened, and thanked the person at the end of the interview.	The student was polite and tried to put the person at ease with the situation. Made some eye contact and nodded encouragement occasionally. Listened, didn't interrupt and thanked the person at the end of the interview.	The student was friendly and polite, putting the person at ease with the situation. Made eye contact and nodded encouragement. Listened, didn't interrupt and thanked the person at the end of the interview.
Knowledge Gained	The student cannot answer questions about the person who was interviewed.	The student can answer some questions about the person who was interviewed.	The student can answer questions about the person's views and begins to make connections between the interview and the research focus.	The student can explain the person's views in detail and the ways in which they relate to the research focus.	The student can explain the person's views in detail and the ways in which they relate to the research focus. The student can also evaluate the significance of the interview to the project.

References:

http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?ts=1074040666   http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/

lesson_view.asp?id=17 http://college.hmco.com/education/pbl/construction/

tools_interviews.html

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9â€"10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2c Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

6th Lesson - Objective Reporters

Goals/Objectives

After the completion of this lesson, students will be able to identify the components of a

newspaper, including those that are the most engaging and those that lack engaging structures.

Students will be able to evaluate the needs of audiences for these publications and propose new

creative plans to improve newspaper readership.

Materials/Resources

Example newspapers

computers

highlighters

Scissors

Glue

Posterboard

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/29/decline-print-media-journalism-web

Anticipatory Set

Students will watch this video from The Daily Show. The video depicts the state of newspapers in America by touring the New York Times building and interviewing some heads of the company. The segment itself is an example of satirical reporting. Students will discuss the video's content and the video as a piece of reporting itself.

Direct Instruction

After watching the video about the decline of print journalism, students will read this article by Mary Kissel, of the Guardian, about the decline of print journalism. This article will contrast starkly with the video in its approach to reporting. While reading the article, students will also be given an outline helping them detail the differences in content and style of reporting between the Guardian's report and the Daily Show's report.

Guided Practice

Students will then move to looking at the primary source: newspapers. Students will be provided a series of different newspapers from which they can dissect their features. On poster boards and in groups of three, students will scour the newspapers for those features they find most engaging

and those they find least engaging. They will cut out these features and post them on the poster board, and present their boards to the class. For the second part of the project, students will put together a proposal for print newspapers, explaining how they improve readership and grow their audience. This proposal will include what audience the students think the paper has currently, what audiences could be attained by their proposal, and what features could be added/altered to do so. The proposal may include ideas for a digital version of the paper as well.

Closure

The ticket out the door for this lesson, as with all the lessons in this unit, will be for students to record a question about material missing from the lesson, or a critical thinking question about the lesson, to be reviewed the next day.

Independent Practice

Students will turn to their discussion blogs for independent practice. For this discussion, they must post one of their ideas to improve print journalism readership. They must also reply to another students post, evaluating the quality of the idea. Students must apply a rubric grade to their own post, the post to which they reply, and to their reply.

Assessment

Students will add their proposals and a documented photo of their poster board presentation to

their portfolio for assessment.

Name:

Period:

Date:

	The Daily Show	**The Guardian**
Notable Features		
Similarities		
Differences		

7th Lesson - Objective Reporters

Goals/Objectives

Students will be able to collaborate on the creation of a classroom newspaper. They will organize

the format of the paper by assigning roles and making decisions according to a specific process.

Students will also be able to use learning from previous lessons to conduct interviews and craft

articles based on role.

Materials/Resources

Computers

http://www.npr.org/2013/06/01/187534165/are-high-school-newspapers-an-endangered-species

http://hosbeg.com/components-of-a-newspaper-feature-story/

Anticipatory Set

The beginning of this lesson will be the assigning of roles. This will be done at random, by drawing student names out of a box. They will then write an "about the author" blurb that will be included at the end of the newspaper.

Direct Instruction

Students will start by reading an article detailing the important components of a newspaper article. Once students have finished reading, the class will discuss whether the article provides a complete list of components, and if not, what they're missing. Once the class is in agreement about what their writing pieces should include, they will move to the outlining period.

Guided Practice

At this point, students will begin to plan their writing pieces for the newspaper. Theses pieces should include interviews, statistics, and have to do with their role. For example, the student(s) charged with the sports section of the newspaper should decide on an idea for a writing piece about the school's sports. They might choose to interview a member of the golf team who is competing for most improved player. The article may be aimed at conveying how that student improved their game, and might even interview other members of the team and the coach for differing perspectives. They could include the players statistics from the previous season and this season, using them to support their claims. A student might also choose to write an article about a controversial local issue, like the removal of popular foods from vending machines because of

health concerns. The student could interview students and faculty to gather differing opinions on the issue, as well as how they might approach the situation differently. They could also provide nutritional statistics from former and current vending machine choices, or conduct a poll.

Closure

the ticket out the door for this lesson, as always, will be for students to record a question for clarity of material covered that day, or a critical thinking question, that the class will discuss the next day.

Independent Practice

Students will turn to their discussion blogs for independent practice. They must create a post conducting a poll that they can use for their article. For example, a student writing an entertainment article might poll the other "newspaper authors" on their favorite CDs or movies released that year. They might also poll students about their awareness of a current issue or movement. Students will not need to evaluate their polling question based on the discussion rubric because it will not meet the parameters, however they must provide an answer to each polling question.

Assessment

Students will submit their writing piece for the newspaper to their portfolio for assessment. The writing piece should represent their understanding of important informational text features in the context of newspaper writing, as well as a critical understanding of the evolution of print and digital journalism.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9â€"10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2a Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2c Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

8th Lesson- True Stories

The third section of this unit will focus on Stephen King's *On Writing.* Students will work with the literary nonfiction text to further develop their understanding of the relationship between narrative and informational writing. Beginning with the Standards document itself, students receive very little exposure to narrative structure within the informational text. Shifting to newspaper writing, students experience narrative structure by reporting on local events, retelling them objectively. The final section allows students to explore the blending of narrative and informational with less restriction and more creativity. Students will read selections from King's memoir critically, pulling from them both the directly stated lessons on writing creatively, and the methods he used to convey these lessons. Students will take this direct instruction into a "studio classroom" environment where they will craft their own memoir pieces. Studio methodology is a concept born of Dawn and Dan Kirby, authors of *New Directions in Teaching Memoir: a Studio Workshop Approach,* that creates an environment much like a studio: open, experimental, engaging, with many works in progress (15). This environment is what gives students ownership of their writing. "We came to see that we were too much given to *telling* our students how to solve their writing problems. Studio-style teaching was an excellent fit with CM because memoir, by the very nature of the genre, will always belong to the writer" (Kirby & Kirby, 15).

Goals/Objectives

Students will be able to use literary elements and narrative structure to construct personal essays, conveying real experiences and providing factual information. Students will also be able to make connections between the Common Core Standards document and Stephen King's memoir.

Resources/Materials

Computers

Stephen King's *On Writing*

Anticipatory Set

Students will start by watching [this portion](#) of Stephen King's biography. Students will connect this to discussions about biographies as informational texts. Students will then be directed to write a short biography for themselves. They may begin their biography as far back as they like but they must write to the present, and then use creative writing to detail an inciting event that leads to their massive success. This activity will make clear to students that their lives can be the inspiration for an informational text in the shape of a biography.

Direct Instruction

Students will not be reading Stephen King's memoir on the craft of writing in its entirety. Instead, they will be doing close readings of selections that mix narrative writing (stories from King's past) and informational writing (lessons on the craft of writing). Because of this, and because students will spend most of their independent practice working with the class's online component, close readings will not be assigned as homework but instead be done as direct instruction. Students will be prompted to read with specific goals in mind, based on the close reading.

Students will start with a close reading about how King learned the value of editing his writing. Students will read the selection from the book. Students will then be split up into five groups of five, and each group will be given a different discussion question. The groups will take a couple minutes to silently review the text after reading the discussion question, and then discuss it.

The discussion questions:

1. How does King's story affect your understanding of the lesson about writing in this selection?

2. What would this lesson on writing look like if it weren't intertwined with King's biographical narrative?

3. King is remembering how he learned the importance of editing. What skills about editing does

he present and why are they important?

4. What text features are present in this close reading? What effect do they have on you, the

reader?

5. Create a list of five questions you would ask King, to further your understanding of the

importance of editing.

Students will be expected to take notes about the group's discussion. When discussions have

come to a close, students will be shuffled so that a member from each original group will

comprise each new group. This new group will take summative action, representing their original

group's findings. Each student should take notes on the other groups' answers to their questions.

Guided Instruction

In this section of the unit, students will begin to workshop their own memoir-style stories,

to convey lessons contributing to an overall theme. Since there has been a focus on successful

career choices, students will continue from previous work, writing stories about their lives that

share lessons on how they've learned to be successful in that field, or how they plan to be successful. They will write five stories in total, and those stories will be added to their portfolio assessment.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write and submit one question regarding the day's material. The question can serve to request missing information, or can be a critical thinking question about the day's content.

Independent Practice

Students will revisit the Common Core Standards document. They will select one specific strand of standards and explain how the close reading selection of King's memoir either meets or falls short of that standard, and why. They are also expected to respond to another student's post, explaining why they agree or disagree. They are expected to evaluate their own discussion post, their own reply, and the discussion post to which they are replying, based on the discussion rubric.

Assessment

Students will submit their first memoir story to their portfolio for assessment.

Standards Addressed

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1](#) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2](#) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5](#) Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3](#) Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5](#) Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

9th Lesson- True Stories

Goals/Objectives

Students will be able to identify and analyze Stephen King's use of humor in his memoir, and the effect it has on the readability of the text. Students will be able to hyperlink to appropriate sources in their writing: students will be able to cite correctly, locate relevant information, and identify when it is beneficial to narrative writing. The essential questions this lesson will deal with are: "what makes a text readable" and "how do we get others to listen?"

Resources/Materials

Computers

Stephen King's *On Writing*

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/common-core-in-action-narrative-writing-heather-wolpert-gawron

Anticipatory Set

Students will play the Wikipedia Game to gain familiarity with hyperlinks. The concept and parameters of the game are simple: in order to win, you must navigate from your random Wikipedia article to the target article by only clicking on hyperlinks provided in the text. The student who wins will be the one who can identify the most relevant hyperlinks, thus creating the

shortest path from the initial article to the target. This game will be run through a number of times, and then students will have a chance to discuss their initial impressions of hyperlinks and their usefulness.

Direct Instruction

Students will read the second close reading selection from King's *On Writing.* This close reading will be focused on King's use of humor and how it enhances or hinders the readability of his text. In order to illustrate his range and effectiveness of humor, students will be asked to rank his five most humorous sentences, explaining their first and last choices. They will be given a list of ten sentences that exemplify King's idea of humor, from which they must select their five favorites.

Guided Practice

Students will return to writing their own memoir pieces. For their second installment, students will infuse their own brand of humor to affect the information they are providing. They will be required to include three hyperlinks, which may have to do with their use of humor.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write and submit one question that either serves to request missing information needed for clarity, or one that places a critical lens on some aspect of the content.

Independent Practice

Students will be asked to locate three hyperlinks that would bolster the effectiveness of King's narrative, either in one of the close readings or in a selection they choose.

Assessment

Students will submit their second installment of memoir writing (including three hyperlinks) to their portfolio for assessment.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

10th Lesson- True Stories

Goals/Objectives

Students will be able to identify and analyze King's use of imagery in his memoir on the craft of writing. Students will be able to point to specific evidence in the text to support their analysis of King's use of imagery, including analysis of his choice of words and phrases.

Resources/Materials

Computers

Paper

Markers

King's *On Writing*

Anticipatory Set

Students will all be given a different segment from King's memoir, and their task will be to draw a picture based on the description, to the best of their ability. Students will be given one piece of paper and a set of markers. They will then going around the room, sharing the description that they were given and how they translated it into a picture.

Direct Instruction

Students will read the third close reading selection from King's memoir. When students have finished reading, the teacher will discuss imagery with the class, and how it appeals to the five senses. Students will be split up into five groups, each receiving a sense. For each sense, the group must make a compilation of descriptions they locate in the text.

Guided Practice

Students will continue writing their memoir series. For the third installment, students will be challenged to use imagery in their writing. Imagery will be assessed based on the imagery rubric included at the end of the lesson. Students will also continue practicing use of hyperlinks in their writing.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write and submit one question about the content covered throughout the day. The purpose of the question can either to be clarify any confusions, or to pose a critical thinking question based on the content.

Independent Practice

Students will turn to their discussion blogs for independent practice. Students will post

answers in response to the question, "*How does King's use of imagery enhance his informational*

text?" They will be expected to evaluate their own posts, evaluate another student's post reply to

it.

Assessment

Students will submit their memoir writing pieces to their portfolio. They will also be

assessed on their discussion blog posts.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of

what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail

its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined

by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

11th Lesson- True Stories

Goals/Objectives

      Students will be able to articulate and argue why they agree or disagree with the prescriptions for writing found in King's memoir. They will be able to to use 21st century practices to present their arguments.

Resources/Materials

Computers

Stephen King's *On Writing*

http://auslit.net/2010/08/12/on-writing-a-memoir-of-the-craft-by-stephen-king/

http://prezi.com

Anticipatory Set

      Students will begin the day by creating a list. The list will consist of steps to take in order to win an argument. The idea of making a list providing steps or naming the best of a certain category is in response to the trend in 21st century writing to publish articles in the form of a list.

These types of articles are becoming more and more relevant in student lives, and therefore should have a presence in the classroom, so that students can take a controlling role.

Direct Instruction

Students will read the fourth close reading from King's memoir quietly to themselves. A discussion will follow the reading, focused on the arching theme of narrative structure in informational texts. After the discussion, students will read an article from the Australian Review that highlights some of *On Writing*'s more important features. The article synthesizes the information shared in King's memoir and presents it matter-of-factly, filtering out the stories attached in the process. It also comments on King's intentions. Students will use this article as a jumping board to begin to build a case for or against King's suggestions. Students will create a Prezi presentation to articulate their arguments, using text, video and audio.

Guided Practice

Students will complete their fourth installment of memoir writing. For this installment, they will focus on using a story from their life to make an argument. They will continue to practice the writing tools they have picked up from previous lessons, including using hyperlinks and creating vivid imagery.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to write and submit one question about the day's content. They may choose to write a question seeking clarity about some confusion or a critical thinking question based on the content.

Independent Practice

Students will post in their discussion blog. The post will revisit the essential question, "why are stories such a popular way to communicate?" Students will use the knowledge they've gained throughout the unit and any research they find appropriate (hyperlink) to form an answer to this question. They must evaluate their post, reply to another student's post, and evaluate both the other student's post and their reply.

Assessment

Students will submit the fourth installment of their memoir series to their portfolio. They will also be assessed on the quality of their discussion blog posts.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

12th Lesson- True Stories

Goals/Objectives

Students will make a clear argument about the value of narrative structure in informational writing, supporting it with evidence gathered throughout the unit.

Anticipatory Set

Students will bring in a picture to share with the class. The picture will have something to do with them memoirs that they are writing, and students will give the class some quick context on their writing project.

Direct Instruction

Students will read their fifth and final close reading selection from King's memoir. Students will focus on the question, "what is more important in this book, the stories or the information?" Students will take notes as they read to help answer the question. When students have completed the reading, they will be randomly partnered up with another student to discussion their conclusions. When they have finished comparing notes, they will switch to a new partner and compare notes. As they continue to switch partners, until they've talked five

other students, their perspective on the question should grow. They should also take notes on differing perspectives offered by other students. A discussion will follow about the necessary balance between stories and information to make for an effective text.

Guided Practice

Students will write the fifth and final installment of their memoir writing series. Students will focus on striking a balance between information and story in this writing piece, as well as the previously discussed elements including imagery, humor, and use of hyperlinks.

Closure

Students' ticket out the door, as always, will be to record and submit one question about the day's lesson. The question can be meant for clarity or for critical thinking.

Independent Practice

Students will post in their discussion blogs for the final time in this unit. Because of its finality, students' posts will be reflective in nature. Students will post about the use of discussion blogs in the classroom, and their role as informational texts. They will comment on another student's post and evaluate both posts as well as their reply.

Assessment

      Students will submit their fifth memoir story to their portfolio. Students will save the

notes taken during the lesson, as they will spend the last week of the unit working on a project of

their choice, based on that question, as well as editing their memoir stories.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of

what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail

its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined

by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a

text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks)

create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or

events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed,

and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Wrapping Up

       The final submission to student portfolios will be a project that students select from a number of options. The purpose of this project is to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on the overarching questions that push the unit forward, and to make some final assertions about those questions.

Traditional Paper

First choice for projects will be a traditional paper. Students will be asked to argue for or against narrative structure in informational texts. The paper will be a small-scale research paper, requiring five sources and 1500 words.

Prezi Presentation

The second choice will be a Prezi presentation. The presentation will accomplish the same task as the paper; students must make an argument about the presence of narrative structure in informational texts. They must also have five sources, but they trade the volume of writing for a presentation.

Newspaper Article

Relating back to the newspaper writing section of the unit, students will have the option to write a newspaper about the Common Core Standards, the focus of the first section of the unit. They must include interviews and pictures.

<u>Video Project</u>

The final choice available to students is a video project. The specifications of this choice will look similar to the newspaper article, but instead of taking form as a written article, it will be a video article. In addition to the video, students who choose this project will be asked to submit an explanation of their composition choices, including camera angle, any music included, lighting, etc.

<h1 align="center">Chapter 4</h1>

Teachers worry that the Common Core Standards intend to mitigate and eventually eliminate the power of literature in the English classroom. They worry that the power of a story will be forgotten, and that the new education system will produce robots that satisfy statistics. The emphasis on informational texts is not a destructive shift. It will mean that veteran teachers may have to retool their curriculum to reflect the rigor that the Common Core represents, but it does not mean that students should be reading instruction manuals all day, either.

In response to the Common Core and professional identity, most teachers report that they plan on tending to student engagement before they tend to standards (52). A common fear among teachers is that this new focus on informational texts will do nothing to engage students in the material, and they will greatly improve their skimming skills, but do very little actual reading. The power of narrative structure is that it can live within these informational texts, and pull students in to engage them with important information by revealing it over the course of a narrative. It is imperative that teachers of English, as well as other content-area teachers embrace the rigor of the Common Core Standards (the testing associated with them is another discussion), but also that they bolster that information with narrative structure.

The literature surrounding this topic is limited because the pieces have yet to fully settle in the aftermath of a Common Core explosion across the country. However, the literature is

growing every day as teachers, administrators and scholars grapple with the new standards. In response to the English Language Arts shifts specifically, there are a couple common fears. The first is that the classic fiction that has been a presence in the ELA classroom for many lifetimes will all but be eliminated with the new focus on informational texts. The Common Core implores that students are less prepared for college and careers by engaging with works of fiction for the majority of the school year, and argues that nonfiction texts are more suitable for this type of preparation. They have provided that fiction offers some value, allotting the genre 30% of the total curriculum's space, but educators worry that this devaluing will continue in the coming years.

Because of this major shift in the perception of the English curriculum, educators also fear that they will have to start from the beginning, in terms of curriculum planning. This new beginning includes preparing for a new set of standardized testing, by which teachers will be evaluated, in part. However, the literature is not all negative; many educators and scholars are putting out words of encouragement and suggestions for an easier transition to the new era. One author in particular, Thomas Newkirk, suggests a pinch of narrative to make the informational go down a bit more smoothly. As it has been argued and put into practice in this thesis, narrative structure is a means for full engagement and more sound understanding when working with informational texts. Newkirk argues that the best informational texts, and the ones that students will engage with the most are the ones that have mastered the art of embedding a story in their writing. If the writing can unfold for a student, they are more likely to read it for all that it offers, rather than skimming for the information that they seek (29). This blending of narrative and

informational is imperative to a successful transition for students and teachers to the new standards.

The solution to the problem facing English classrooms described above is provided here in the form of a curriculum focused on working with informational texts that engage students with narrative structure. This focus is intended to create an awareness among students of the shift in curriculum and the effect it has on them, while providing them the resources and authority to decide for themselves about the value of informational texts and narrative structures.

This unit accomplishes its task in three sections. The first section utilizes the Common Core Standards document as the ultimate informational text, packed with information that follows a well-organized structure, but one with which students have difficulty engaging. The second section transitions to the objective reporting found in both print and digital journalism. This section takes a step closer to understanding the benefits of narrative structure, and allows students to work together collaboratively on the creation of a class newspaper in the process. The last section addresses literary nonfiction's role in the shift to informational texts through Stephen King's memoir, *On Writing: a Memoir of the Craft.* This section most closely mirrors the tasks that are normally associated with works of fiction, and connects them to the powers of informational texts. Throughout the unit, researched-based teaching practices are embedded to keep engagement high and to keep students thinking critically about the material they are presented and the material they locate for themselves.

When students have completed this unit, they will have gained necessary skills for navigating, creating, and analyzing informational texts of all kinds, as well as informed

arguments about the importance of informational texts and the value of narrative structure within those texts.

A great deal of research is still necessary, as educators begin to settle in with the Common Core Standards. The literature provided to this point is just speculation, as we have yet to see the real consequences of the implementation of these standards play out. A great deal of research must be conducted as to the effect these changes have on students who find themselves in the transition period, as well as those younger students who will only experience the Common Core Standards, and see them as commonplace. Research about educators and their continuing experience with these changes as they become more comfortable in their roles and receive more sound resources is necessary. We are now only seeing the predictive research regarding the Common Core Standards. It is important that research is conducted throughout the transition and after the implementation is complete.