



The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
Le Secrétariat de la littératie et de la numératie

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat Webcast Professional Learning Series

Viewer's Guide

Non-Fiction Writing

Multi-media resource
for professional learning



Curriculum Services Canada | Service des programmes d'études Canada



On this DVD you will find ...

The multi-media package *Non-Fiction Writing* includes print and video resources for viewing and reproduction. On this DVD you will find:

- Featured Webcast: Play All
- Webcast Segments, 1 to 7
- Print and Video Resources
 - Viewer's Guide (PDF)
 - Teacher Resources to Support Webcast (PDF)
 - LNS Monograph, *Non-Fiction Writing for the Junior Student* (PDF)
 - Non-Fiction Writing Video Files (WMV)

The DVD is formatted to work on your computer's DVD drive. It will not work in the computer's CD-ROM drive or in a regular DVD player.

For additional copies of this DVD, please contact Curriculum Services Canada at 416-591-1576 or toll-free at 1-800-837-3048. The webcast and other relevant resources are also accessible online at www.curriculum.org.

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Background Information

It has become abundantly clear that living in a knowledge society puts a special onus on today's students to become proficient, critical communicators – to be able to speak and write clearly, accurately and effectively, keeping their intended audience in mind. Most of the texts that students encounter daily are informational, which is why instruction in reading and writing non-fiction has become such an important priority for educators.

New knowledge is growing exponentially and technology is constantly and rapidly changing. We do not know now what our students will need to understand and be able to do in the future. However, regardless of the changes in knowledge and technology that develop, we know that the ability to write well will be critical for success. Our students will need to know how to generate ideas; to decide on a topic, purpose, audience and form; to access, evaluate and synthesize information; to revise and edit; and to share information with others. Through their experiences with a wide variety of informational and graphic texts they will, ideally, develop an understanding of how text forms and features work to convey meaning. By giving our students opportunities to “deconstruct” text, we show them how text forms are created and structured, building their comprehension and writing skills. Just as students need to be critical readers, they also need to assume a critical stance during all stages of the writing process.

Students who develop non-fiction writing skills improve their achievement in all areas of the curriculum. They read and re-read their writing to ensure they have achieved their purpose. As students write in every subject area, they experiment with content-specific vocabulary, text forms, writing techniques and media to find the most effective way of communicating their ideas. Students become proficient readers and writers and are able to understand subject specific text forms, features and language. During this process, they read and learn content while learning how to write effectively. These writing skills are transferable and life-long.

Teachers need to explicitly teach writing process and writer's craft. They need to provide multiple opportunities for students to immerse themselves in different genres and text forms and then to apply their learning to their own writing. Timely and explicit feedback from a variety of audiences helps students make appropriate decisions as writers.

In order for writing to become a life-long habit, students must see the value and joy in writing. They need to write for a real purpose and audience and they need to be making choices as experienced writers do. The use of mentor texts helps demonstrate the richness and impact of the writer's craft and introduces students to the voice of the author. Interacting with authors in person, or virtually, gives students a sense of how empowering and satisfying writing can be. It also demonstrates that there is no wrong or right way to write and that each author must find his or her own unique style. Through experiences with well-constructed texts of all types, students develop an eye and an ear for quality that is ultimately reflected in their own writing. You may wish to refer to *Non-Fiction Writing for the Junior Student* (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, 2008) for an overview of research on the benefits of non-fiction writing for students. (This LNS monograph can be found in the Print and Video Resources folder on the *Non-Fiction Writing* DVD.)

Featured Webcast

According to Fountas and Pinnell, the purpose of non-fiction writing is to “inform or persuade,” while the purpose of fiction is to “entertain and involve readers (or listeners) in stories of life” (2001, p. 393).

In today's world, however, it can be argued that the distinction between the two genres is not always so clear.

- Before viewing this webcast, take a moment to reflect on what you think constitutes non-fiction writing. How would you help students to distinguish non-fiction from fiction?

The National Commission on Writing says that “if students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write” (2003, p. 9).

- Why is learning how to create and respond to non-fiction reading and writing so essential to improve student learning?

Segment 1:

Connie Wright – Persuasive Writing (Grades 5 and 6)

(Length: 18 minutes)

- i. Deconstructing a Newspaper Article (Length: 6 minutes)
- ii. A.P.E. + (Answer, Proof, Extend, Conclusion) (Length: 5 minutes)
- iii. Metacognition (Length: 2 minutes)
- iv. Assessment and Reflection (Length: 5.5 minutes)

Synopsis:

In Connie Wright's class, we see students engaged in the process of inquiry. By deconstructing a variety of texts, students learn what makes a text effective and through this process strengthen their own writing.

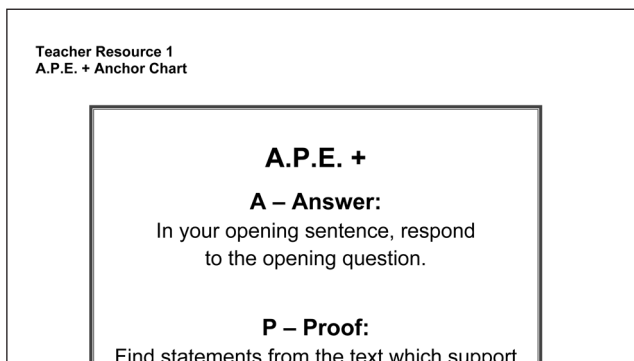
To deepen understanding:

1. Thinking about one's thinking builds awareness of oneself as a learner. Articulating one's ideas and listening to the thoughts of others helps build clarity. In one of her lessons, Connie has students separate themselves into different corners of the room depending upon their position on the issue of whether artifacts found by archeologists should be kept in a museum or sold to individuals.

What next steps would you take to help build on the learning that has occurred from this lesson? What strategies would you use to help your students transfer the learning from this oral activity to their own writing process?

2. What strategies did you notice Connie using to move her students through the writing process? Which of these strategies are aligned with your current practice? How are these strategies beneficial to your students?
3. In Connie's segment, her students refer to an A.P.E. + Anchor Chart (Teacher Resource 1) on various occasions. Her students' comments and reflections suggest that they have internalized the chart and that it has become a useful tool to support them during the writing process.

What steps would you take in order to integrate the process reflected in this anchor chart into your students' learning?



Segment 2:

Dr. Douglas Reeves – The Power of Non-Fiction Writing

(Length: 5 minutes)

Synopsis:

According to Dr. Douglas Reeves, research shows that when students engage in more non-fiction writing, their performance improves in other areas of the curriculum, including science, social studies, mathematics and reading.

To deepen understanding:

1. How would you introduce more non-fiction reading and writing into your classroom?
2. Alignment between what is simultaneously taught in different content areas improves student learning. The teaching of non-fiction writing can be effectively integrated into any subject area.

Select a content area for your grade level area and review the curriculum expectations to determine where students would benefit from knowing how to write a specific type of non-fiction.

Design a yearly planning form that would facilitate cross-curricular alignment on non-fiction writing.

Segment 3:

Bridget Scime – Report Writing (Grade 4)

(Length: 22 minutes)

- i. Effective Literacy Instruction (Length: 3 minutes)
- ii. Deconstruction of a Web Page (Length: 5 minutes)
- iii. Language and Word Study (Length: 8 minutes)
- iv. Organization, Revision, and Reflection (Length: 5 minutes)

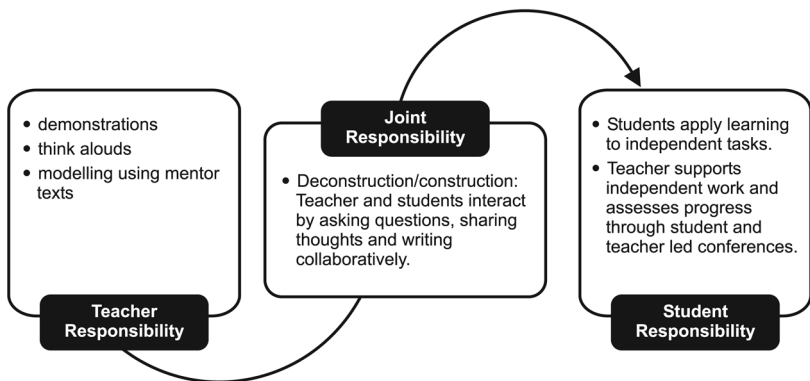
Synopsis:

In Bridget Scime’s classroom, we see students engaged in the deconstruction of web pages in order to identify the specific characteristics of that text form. They examine content, design and writer’s craft so that they can apply these elements effectively to the creation of their own web pages.

To deepen understanding:

1. How does the gradual release of responsibility model help to foster students’ writing skills? How does this teacher involve students in self-assessment of their work? (Refer to Teacher Resource 2.)

Figure 1: Gradual Release of Responsibility Model



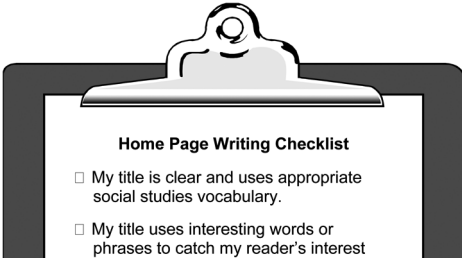
Teacher Resource 2a
Website Planning



Website Planning Checklist

- Have I decided what information will be presented on each page?
- Have I thought about where my information will go on each page?

Teacher Resource 2b
Home Page Writing Checklist



Home Page Writing Checklist

- My title is clear and uses appropriate social studies vocabulary.
- My title uses interesting words or phrases to catch my reader's interest

2. This teacher integrates literacy and social studies. What are the benefits of this integration? What approaches do you use to create these cross-curricular links?
3. How does this teacher help her students see the relevance of what they are learning? How do you help your students see the value of what they are learning and apply it to other situations both inside and outside of school?

Segment 4:

Richard Worzel – Learning for Tomorrow’s World

(Length: 2.5 minutes)

Synopsis:

In this segment, Richard Worzel speaks about the need to develop students’ educational toolkits in order to prepare them for tomorrow’s world. In order to do so, however, one must “step back and look at ... the environment in which today’s learners are going to have to function as adults.”

To deepen understanding:

Take a moment to reflect on Worzel’s comment. Which literacies do you think students will need for the 21st century? How can teachers contribute to an educational toolkit for students that will benefit them in the world that Worzel speaks about?

Segment 5:

Dan Grant – Media Writing (Grade 5)

(Length: 11 minutes)

- i. Becoming Proficient Communicators (Length: 5.5 minutes)
- ii. Deconstruction and Construction of a Media Text (Length: 5.5 minutes)

Synopsis:

Dan Grant begins his session by stating the goals of his literacy instruction: to help his students become competent, critical communicators. Using a wide variety of media text forms, students participate in an analysis of media construction and the techniques used by media to tell a story. Students build upon this knowledge by working in groups to create their own public service announcement videos.

To deepen understanding:

1. This teacher connects inside and outside school literacies in order to make learning relevant to his students. Reflect on the ways in which he pulls outside literacies into his classroom. How can you use outside literacies to enhance your students’ understanding of non-fiction writing?

2. This teacher has built a blog not only to facilitate student learning but also to create a mode of communication between himself, his students and their parents. What preparation would need to occur with your students in order to engage them in this form of authentic writing? Discuss the effective use of a classroom blog and record your thoughts using the PMI chart provided in Teacher Resource 3. Refer to Teacher Resource 4 as a template for a communication tool between home and school.
3. Graphic organizers assist students during the writing process. This teacher uses a storyboard to help students create public service announcements. (Refer to Teacher Resource 5.) How might you use this organizer to introduce media writing to bring the content areas alive for students?

Teacher Resource 3
PMI Chart

Pluses	Minuses	Interesting Ideas

Teacher Resource 4
Weekly Reflection

The weekly reflection is an opportunity for you to plan to achieve your academic/school goals.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

LAST WEEK'S GOAL: _____

EVALUATE STRATEGIES USED TO ACHIEVE GOAL:

1. _____


2. _____

NEXT WEEK'S GOAL(s): (MAKE GOALS SPECIFIC & CLEAR)

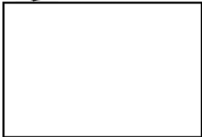
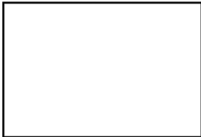

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL:

1. _____

Teacher Resource 5
Storyboard

 Storyboard

Names _____ Date _____

		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Segment 6:

Royan Lee – Advertisement Writing (Grade 5)

(Length: 17 minutes)

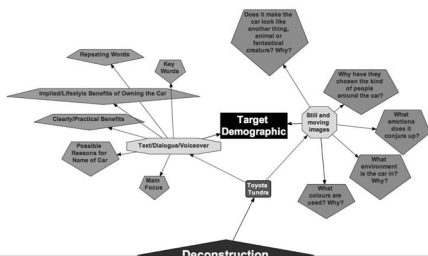
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| i. Deconstructing Media | (Length: 4.5 minutes) |
| ii. The Moodle | (Length: 1.5 minutes) |
| iii. Word Choice and Techniques in Advertising | (Length: 9 minutes) |
| iv. Student Reflections | (Length: 1 minute) |

Synopsis:

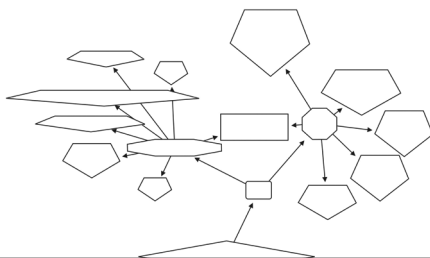
“My students will need to be critically literate in order to deal with the enormous amounts of information ... They’ll need to be independent and flexible thinkers aware of the techniques media experts use to influence the public ... On the other hand, they will also need to be able to communicate effectively using those same techniques in their work and personal lives.”

Royan Lee uses car advertisements as a method of involving his students in the process of non-fiction writing. In this segment we see him working with his class to analyze this media form and apply the learning to their writing. (Refer to Teacher Resource 6a & b.)

Teacher Resource 6a
Sample Mind Map: Creating an Ad



Teacher Resource 6b
Mind Map Template



To deepen understanding:

1. In this class, we see the purposeful integration of technology. How does this impact on teaching the writing process?
2. The teacher is teaching his students skills which serve to extend learning beyond the classroom. How does the integration of technology impact the assessment process?
3. The teacher states that media is constructed deliberately to accomplish specific goals and that his students must “deconstruct in order to construct.” How does Royan help his students to develop a critical eye through the deconstruction of mentor texts?

Segment 7:

Dr. Ruth McQuirter Scott – Word Study

(Length: 4.5 minutes)

Synopsis:

Dr. Ruth McQuirter Scott discusses the importance of vocabulary knowledge and word study in improving student success in all content areas. Incorporating these components in lessons throughout the school day improves students' reading comprehension and writing skills.

To deepen understanding:

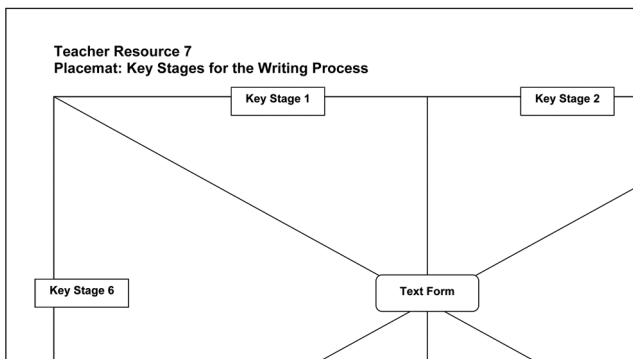
1. How do you incorporate language and word study into your classroom?
2. In what ways can these components be integrated into all content areas?

Revisiting the Featured Webcast

This webcast showcased four teachers using different mediums and various mentor texts to inform students about and engage students in the process of non-fiction writing.

- Think about the process that each teacher and student went through as they examined the characteristics and unique language of each medium. What were the key stages involved in writing a persuasive piece, a web page, a public service announcement and a car advertisement?
- Use the placemat provided (Teacher Resource 7) as a template to identify the key stages of the creation process for each medium. To help guide your thinking, a sample list of key stages has been provided on the bottom of the placemat; you may wish to consider additional key stages that have not been listed. (You will need a minimum of four copies of the placemat to work through each of the four text forms explored in the webcast.)
- For each key stage, think about the specific strategies that were used by the teachers in the webcast to teach this part of the writing process. For each key stage, jot down your thoughts in the space provided. Groups may wish to assign one placemat to each member of the group and discuss the results afterwards.

1. In comparing the key stages, what conclusions have you drawn about the processes of creating each text form?
2. How do the processes you witnessed in the four classrooms support Worzel's notion of creating educational toolkits for your students that will be relevant to tomorrow's world?



How to Access the Print and Video Resources

To access the **Print and Video Resources in Windows**, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer:

- Click on the Start Menu.
- Select “My Computer.”
- Right-click your mouse on the DVD icon titled “NONFICTION_WRITING.”
- From the options list, click on “Open.”
- Double-click on the folder titled “Print and Video Resources” to access the teacher resources. Ignore the folders titled Audio_TS and Video_TS.
- Select the resources you wish to use directly from this folder, OR
- Copy the files onto your Desktop and open them from the Desktop.

Alternatively, when the DVD is inserted and the options box opens:

- Select “Open folder to view files.”
- Click on the “Resources” folder.
- Select the resources you wish to use directly from this folder, OR
- Copy the files onto the Desktop and open them from the Desktop.

To access the **Print and Video Resources in Mac OS X**, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer:

- Exit from the DVD player (typically this opens automatically when a DVD is inserted in the drive).
- Select the DVD icon titled “NONFICTION_WRITING.”
- Select the resources you wish to use directly from this folder, OR
- Copy onto the desktop and open files from the desktop.

How to Insert a Video Clip into a PowerPoint Presentation

On this DVD you will find WMV versions of all segments of the webcast. To insert a clip into a PowerPoint follow the directions below:

1. Open PowerPoint.
2. Create a new PowerPoint presentation.

OR

Open an existing PowerPoint presentation to which you wish to add video.

3. Insert a DVD into the DVD drive of your computer.
4. If a new window pops up and asks you how you would like to view the files on the disc, choose "Open folder to view files."

OR

If a new window does not open, go to My Computer which can be accessed from the Start menu. Once the My Computer window has opened, double-click on the icon shaped like a disc, that will likely be labeled D or E.

5. Save the video segment that you would like to insert into a PowerPoint into the same folder that the PowerPoint presentation is saved in on your computer.

Video files that have been saved onto your computer can be cropped and edited into smaller segments using Movie Maker (free on PCs) or iMovie (free on Macintosh).

6. On the slide that you would like to insert the video, click on Insert in the PowerPoint menu bar.
7. Under Insert, select Movies and Sounds.
8. Click on Movie from File.
9. A window will pop up which will ask you to find the video file that you would like to add.
10. Find and select the video file that you saved earlier in step 5.
11. Once you choose the video file you need, another window will pop up and ask if you want your movie to play automatically when you enter the slide or to play when it is clicked. Choose your preference.
12. You will notice that the starting image of your movie is not displayed on the slide.

How to Save the Video Files to Your Computer

The video files can all be copied and saved to your computer using either of the following methods for copying and pasting files.

Method 1

1. Right-click your mouse on the file and choose “Copy.”
2. Right-click your mouse within any folder that you would like to save the file in and choose “Paste.”

Method 2

1. Left-click your mouse on the file you would like to save, to highlight the file.
2. Simultaneously press the “Ctrl” and “C” keys (for Macintosh users, the “Command” and “C” keys) to copy the file.
3. Left-click your mouse within any folder that you would like to save the file in and simultaneously press the “Ctrl” and “V” keys (for Macintosh users, the “Command” and “V” keys) to paste the file there.

For Macintosh users, the “Command” key is the one with the following symbol: 

Note to Viewers:

To insert video files into your PowerPoint presentation, you must save these files into the same folder that contains your PowerPoint file. If you save a PowerPoint presentation to another location (e.g., a memory stick, CD-ROM, etc.) you must also save the video file in the same location in order for the video to play. This means that if you transfer the PowerPoint presentation to another computer, you must also transfer the video files with it. Otherwise, the video will not link to the PowerPoint presentation.

References

Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (2008). *Non-Fiction Writing for the Junior Student*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

National Commission on Writing in America's Colleges and Universities. (2003). *The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution*. New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board. Retrieved April 8, 2008 from http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf



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