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English Programs

Prince Edward Island English Language Arts Curriculum

English Language Arts

Writing
421A

CURRICULUM



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English Language Arts

Writing 421A

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Introduction

Background

Writing 421A is a provincially developed course, planned collaboratively by a committee of Prince Edward Island teachers and the Language Arts Curriculum Specialist of the Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It is based on the vision provided by the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum (1996) for all courses in English language arts, the vision of enabling and encouraging students to become reflective, articulate, literate individuals who use language successfully for learning and communicating in personal and public contexts. It adheres to the premise that learning experiences in English language arts should

- help students to develop language fluency not only in the school setting, but also in their lives in the wider world;
- contribute toward students' achievement of the essential graduation learnings (See *Foundation for Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*, pp. 5-9).

The following chart shows core and elective senior high English language arts courses offered in the public schools of Prince Edward Island.

Core senior high English language arts courses	
<i>Academic</i>	<i>General</i>
English 421A	English 431A
English 521A	English 531A
English 621A	English 631A
Elective senior high English language arts courses	
Writing 421A	
Creative Writing 521A	
Media 531A	
Communications 801A	

All senior high students must complete four language arts credits as part of the minimum graduation requirements. Students who do not study a second language will need to obtain an additional credit from the elective English language arts courses.

Purpose of Writing 421A

Writing 421A is designed to support students as they strive to become proficient writers.

Proficient writers are students who can write clearly in response to a wide variety of writing tasks. They can adapt their writing to suit a specific audience and achieve a particular purpose. They can navigate through a wide range of formats, such as paragraphs, essays, e-mails, reports, personal journals, instructions, memos, and many others.

Proficient writers are students who think clearly in writing.

Writing 421A offers students an opportunity to become proficient writers through extended practice. Students enrolled in this course can expect to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of real audiences and real purposes to use writing to integrate information, using a range of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text supported by research to learn to write effectively, clearly, and precisely.

Although its core genres are informational/expository, persuasive, personal/narrative, and business/professional writing, instruction in Writing 421A emphasizes process. Students learn and practise strategies to plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing, and develop the confidence to apply the strategies habitually and effectively to any writing task. Additionally, students practise the specific skills inherent in the research process, such as finding and narrowing a topic, searching for information, note-taking, and evaluating and documenting sources of information.

Instruction in Writing 421A also emphasizes the characteristics, or traits, common to all effective writing: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. An awareness of these traits supports informed and productive peer and teacher conferencing, allows a common language for discussing writing, and provides students with the skills to revise and edit their writing purposefully. The course provides an opportunity for students to develop a portfolio of written products to document their skills and progress.

Although the focus of Writing 421A is the production of written text, the course recognizes the close relationship between writing and the other language processes as outlined in the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: speaking, listening, reading, viewing, and representing. In particular, because the development of critical reading skills is key to the development of writing skills, students in Writing 421A are encouraged to read extensively and to practise reading like a writer. Also, the Writing 421A curriculum encourages frequent collaboration with peers, allowing students many opportunities to refine their speaking and listening skills.

Writing proficiency develops over time and through repeated practice. By providing students with explicit instruction in skills and strategies – and frequent opportunities to write and discuss writing – Writing 421A prepares students for the varied and ever-changing demands of both academic study and the workplace.

The Writing Teacher

Writing 421A is designed to be taught by teachers who have a good understanding of the writing process as well as an interest in writing. The Writing 421A teacher will need to

- teach, as much as possible, through example and discussion
- encourage students to be assessors of writing and to verbalize their responses to their own and other students' work
- be a writer herself/himself, modeling steps within the writing process and encouraging student response to teacher writing
- encourage students to write across genres for a variety of purposes and audiences
- routinely extend discussion of writing samples by revising them
- structure repeated opportunities for reading, writing, and reflection
- model an enthusiasm for writing.

The Writing Student

The student's role in Writing 421A includes

- working collaboratively and independently
- producing original pieces of work through full engagement in the writing process
- publishing (sharing) their work through avenues with which they are comfortable
- maintaining a portfolio of work reflecting a variety of genres, purposes, and audiences
- modelling a positive attitude toward writing and toward activities designed to achieve course outcomes

Core Elements

- Silent reading (15-20 minutes, 3-5 times a week)
- Journalling/Free writing (15-20 minutes, 3-5 times a week)
- Mini lessons in conventions (as necessary)
- ** Please note that these should be derived from students' writing.*
- Peer conferencing/Teacher conferencing (as necessary)
- Portfolios/ePortfolios (formal or informal)

Principles Underlying English Language Arts

- Language is a primary instrument of thought and the most powerful tool students have for developing ideas and insights, for giving significance to their experiences and for making sense of both their world and their possibilities within it.
- Language learning is an active process of constructing meaning, drawing on all sources and ways of knowing.
- Language learning is personal and intimately connected to individuality.
- Language expresses cultural identity.
- Language learning is developmental: students develop flexibility and fluency in their language use over time.
- Language is best learned when it is integrated: all the language processes are interrelated and interdependent.
- Language is learned holistically. Students best understand language concepts in context rather than in isolation.
- Students learn best when they are aware of the strategies and processes they use to construct meaning and to solve problems.
- Students need frequent opportunities to assess and evaluate their own learning and performance.
- In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback from peers, teachers and others—at school, at home, and in the community.
- Language learning is continual and multidimensional: it can best be assessed by the use of multiple types of evidence that reflect authentic language use over time.
- Students must have opportunities to communicate in various modes what they know and are able to do.
- Assessment must be an integral and ongoing part of the learning process itself, not limited to final products.

Context for Learning and Teaching

The Learning Environment

The learning environment must be structured in such a way that students, alongside their peers, develop confidence in writing, and develop competence with using language for real purposes. Students should be encouraged to start slowly and build gradually. At the same time, they will need specific examples to show that good writing is not some lofty premise.

A supportive environment is especially crucial for students who lack confidence in themselves as learners. If a learning environment sensitive and responsive to the needs of all students is to be created, the students must come to know one another. This builds the base for peer partnerships, tutoring, sharing, and other collaborative efforts. Through mini-lessons, workshops, and small group exercises, knowledge is shared about individual learning styles and interpersonal skills.

It is necessary that the teacher's role be a very active one. The teacher models the writing process. As well, the teacher models ways of drawing everyone into a range of writing experiences, making mental notes about students' writing to conference with them later on an individual basis.

Flexibility is important for all students. Whether students are working individually or in small groups, pairs, or triads, the teacher should

- provide extended periods of time for students to write in an atmosphere of comfort and positive reinforcement
- allow students choice in the topics for writing, understanding that students respond best to those things that matter to them
- select partners for students and also encourage them to select different partners for different reasons
- observe students working individually and within a group, and talk with them about their work
- help students to move beyond their comfort zone and transition from one type of writing into another
- allow students to work alone, if they choose, so long as they still benefit from some group experience
- provide mini-lessons or strategy instruction for the whole class or on a small group basis with other students who have similar learning needs.

By providing these conditions, teachers create an environment that invites students to participate in the kinds of writing experiences that will develop the attitudes, knowledge, skills and strategies required of effective, confident writers.

Meeting the Needs of All Students

The development of students' literacy is shaped by many factors including gender, social and cultural backgrounds, and the extent to which individual needs are met. In designing learning experiences for students, teachers should consider the learning needs, experiences, interests, and values of all students.

In recognizing and valuing the diversity of students, teachers might consider ways to

- provide a climate and design learning experiences to affirm the dignity and worth of all learners in the classroom community
- redress educational disadvantage—for example, as it relates to students living in poverty
- model the use of inclusive language, attitudes, and actions supportive of all learners
- adapt classroom organization, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, time, and learning resources to address learners' needs and build on their strengths
- provide opportunities for learners to work in a variety of learning contexts, including mixed-ability groupings
- identify and respond to diversity in students' learning styles
- build on students' individual levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- design learning and assessment tasks that draw on learners' strengths
- ensure that learners use strengths and abilities to motivate and support learning
- use students' strengths and abilities to motivate and support learning
- offer multiple and varied avenues to learning
- celebrate the accomplishment of learning tasks that learners believed were too challenging for them.

Gender Inclusiveness

In a supportive learning environment, male and female students receive equitable access to resources, including the teacher's time and attention, technology, learning assistance, and a range of roles in group activities. It is important that the curriculum reflect the experience and values of both male and female students and that texts and other learning resources include and reflect the interests, achievements, and perspectives of males and females.

Both male and female students are disadvantaged when oral, written, and visual language creates, reflects, and reinforces gender stereotyping. Through critical examination of the language of a range of texts, students can discover what texts reveal about attitudes toward gender roles and how these attitudes are constructed and reinforced.

Teachers promote gender equity in their classrooms when they

- articulate equally high expectations for male and female students
- provide equal opportunity for input and response from male and female students
- model gender-fair language and respectful listening in all their interactions with students

Valuing Social and Cultural Diversity

Valuing social and cultural diversity in the classroom is one way of expanding and enriching the learning experiences of all students. Students can learn much from the diverse background, experiences, and perspectives of their classmates in a community of learners where participants discuss and explore their own and others' customs, histories, traditions, values, beliefs, and ways of seeing and making sense of the world. Through discussion of each others' writing, students from different social and cultural backgrounds can come to understand other perspectives, to realize that their ways of seeing and knowing are not the only ones possible, and to probe the complexities of the ideas and issues they are examining.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students

Students from language backgrounds other than English add valuable language resources and experiences to the classroom. The first language, prior knowledge, and culture of EAL students should be valued, respected, and whenever possible, incorporated in the curriculum. The different linguistic knowledge and experience of EAL students can be used to extend the understanding of linguistic diversity of all students in the class.

While EAL students should work toward achievement of the same curriculum outcomes as other students, they may approach the outcomes differently and may at times be working with different learning resources at different levels and in a different time frame from other students.

The learning environment and classroom organization should affirm cultural values to support EAL students and provide opportunities for individual and group learning. It is especially important for these students to have access to a range of learning experiences, including opportunities to use language for both formal and informal purposes.

Teachers may need to make explicit the ways in which different forms, styles, and registers of English are used for many different purposes. It is particularly important that EAL students make connections between their learning in English language arts and others curricular areas, and use learning contexts in other subjects to practise, reinforce, and extend their language skills.

Technology and the Language Arts

Information and communications technology is becoming increasingly important in our global society. Today's students need to develop literacy in relation to computer and information technology, and they must be able to critically reflect on the role of technology in their lives. Whenever appropriate, students should be encouraged to apply their technological knowledge and skills to managing information and communication in Writing 421A.

Links to Other Disciplines

Students should be encouraged to explore ways in which to link their learning in Writing 421A to their studies in other courses, particularly those courses requiring research, self-exploration, or the clear expression of ideas. Teachers from other disciplines may be invited as guest speakers to discuss the kinds of writing required in their disciplines or to share their own experiences with writing.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

The role of education for sustainable development is to help people develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and for the future, and to act upon those decisions. ESD is an approach to teaching and learning based on the ideals and principles that underlie sustainability—human rights, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, peace, environmental protection, democracy, health, biological and landscape diversity, climate change, gender equality, and protection of indigenous cultures. In these and many other dimensions, education for sustainable development is analogous with the vision and goals of UNESCO (from “Education for Sustainable Development”, [Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#)).

Teachers of Writing 421A are encouraged to consider ESD-related themes for pre-writing class discussions and to invite students to research ESD-related subjects and share their findings with peers. The key action themes identified by UNESCO are as follows:

- overcoming poverty
- gender equality
- health promotion
- environment
- rural development
- cultural diversity
- peace and human security
- sustainable urbanization

The first challenge for students who choose to research one of the above broad themes will be to narrow their research topic. To do this, they may find it valuable to consult with a science or social studies teacher for appropriate sub-topics that are current and of local relevance.

Resource Based Learning

Effective teaching and learning in writing actively involves students, teachers, and library staff in the effective use of a wide range of print, non-print, and human resources. Resource based learning fosters students' development by accommodating their diverse backgrounds, learning styles, needs, and abilities.

Resource based learning supports students as they develop information literacy: more specifically, accessing, interpreting, evaluating, organizing, selecting, producing, and communicating information in and through a variety of media, technologies, and contexts. When students engage in their own research with appropriate guidance, they are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, and to retain information.

In a resource based learning environment, students and teachers make decisions about appropriate sources of information and tools for learning, and how to access them. A resource-based approach raises the issues of selecting and evaluating information sources. Developing the critical skills needed for these tasks is essential to writing.

The range of possible resources for research writing include the following:

- print—books, magazines, newspapers, documents, and other publications
- visuals—maps, illustrations, photographs, charts, and graphs
- artifacts—concrete objects and primary source documents
- individual and community—interviews, field work, community sites
- multimedia—films, audio and video tapes, television and radio, simulations
- information technology—computer software, databases, CD-ROMs, DVDs, GPS, live-streaming broadcasts, podcasts, and locational technologies
- communication technology—Internet sites, blogs, e-mail, and social media

Resource based learning takes place in the Writing 421A classroom through a variety of means. The prescribed text book, although a principle source of information for the student, is only one of many resources available. Students in a Writing 421A class will make use of many other sources of information, including magazines, news articles, Internet Web sites, government publications, and social science agencies. For a fully enriched learning experience, students should be encouraged to explore and engage in as many diverse sources of information as possible.

Introduction to Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a model for classrooms that emphasizes long-term, interdisciplinary and student-centered activities. Learners are able to conduct in-depth investigations of real world issues and challenges. This type of learning engages students as they obtain a deeper knowledge of a subject area through inquiry, research, experimentation, and/or the assistance of a community member.

PBL allows students to explore, investigate, and construct new meaning from prior knowledge and from the information that is retrieved from other sources. It is not linear in form but promotes a continual looping back and forth throughout the process as students gather and process new information, redirect their inquiries, and continue through the process. Inquiry into an environmental issue will require students to practice and refine their critical and creative thinking skills. The process of working with acquired information and reformulating it into newly constructed meaning is emphasized in this course.

In order for students of Writing 421A to become fully engaged in the PBL model, they will need to draw on their prior knowledge, ask many questions, and conduct preliminary research to help them define the direction of their inquiry. Classroom discussions about specific life and career issues may help them to decide where their inquiry will take them. Current events portrayed in the media may also be a catalyst to student inquiry as well as several other sources. An inquiry plan will ensure that students know what is expected of them and will aid in keeping track of progress throughout the PBL model. One of the key features of PBL is inquiry.

Inquiry Based Learning

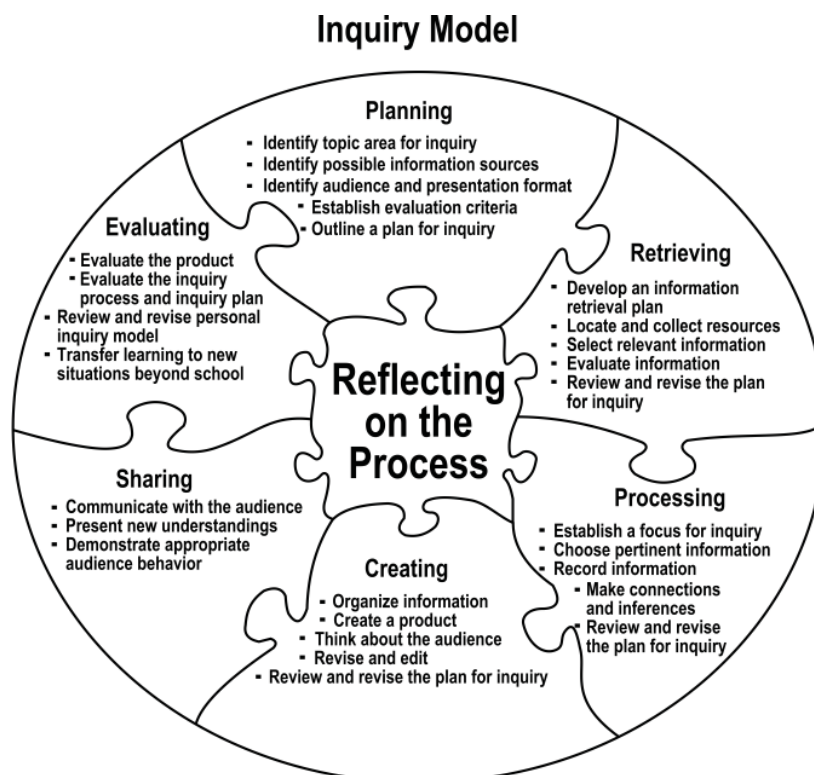
Introduction

Inquiry Based learning (IBL) allows students to explore, investigate, and construct new meaning from prior knowledge and from new information that is retrieved from other sources. It is not linear in nature, but promotes a continual looping back and forth throughout the process as students gather and process new information, redirect their inquiries, and continue through the process. Inquiry into a research topic will require students to practise and refine their critical and creative-thinking skills. “Inquiry” and “research” are often used interchangeably within an educational context. While research often becomes the end-result of an inquiry process, it is the process itself—working with acquired information and reformulating it into newly-constructed meaning— that is emphasized in this course.

In order for students of Writing 421A to become fully engaged in the inquiry process, they will need to draw upon their prior knowledge, conduct preliminary research to help them define the direction of their inquiry, and ask many questions. A research plan will ensure that students know what is expected of them and will provide a means of keeping track of progress throughout the inquiry unit.

A Sample Inquiry Model

The following graphic from Alberta Learning’s “Focus on Inquiry” guide (2004) provides a sample visual model based on six phases associated with the inquiry process.



Inquiry Stages and Skills

The Alberta inquiry model on the previous page is only one sample of an inquiry model. Other models may use variations of these phases, terminology, or headings. Below is another model that uses three stages to organize its inquiry model.

Independent inquiry involves certain process skills (learned abilities), habits of mind (acquired attitudes), and responsibilities related to interaction with new information. Independent thinkers will practise multiple strategies to maneuver through an inquiry process. A typical inquiry process may follow three stages—**Beginning Inquiry**, **Ongoing Inquiry**, and **Concluding Inquiry**—each stage associated with specific skills and corresponding to sequential phases within the inquiry model used in this document. Note that there may be some overlap of phases.

Beginning Inquiry Stage (Planning and Retrieving)

- using prior and background knowledge as base for new inquiry
- developing and refining a range of inquiry questions
- finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources in a range of formats (e.g., textual, digital, visual, other media) to pursue inquiry

Ongoing Inquiry Stage (Retrieving and Processing)

- evaluating information for accuracy, validity, appropriateness, relevance, and context
- interpreting and contextualizing information from different sources by identifying main ideas and supporting evidence, conflicting ideas, bias, and point of view
- using technology to access and organize information
- collaborating with others to exchange new ideas and develop new understandings

Concluding Inquiry Stage (Creating, Sharing, and Evaluating)

- using writing, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create a product that expresses new understandings
- using communication skills to share new understandings in a way that others can access, view, and use
- using information and technology ethically and responsibly by documenting sources accurately, avoiding plagiarism, and respecting the rules of intellectual property.

Adapted from *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*.

Guided Inquiry

Guided inquiry draws upon the expertise of teachers and teacher-librarians in directing students to find a variety of sources to address an inquiry, solve a problem, or increase understanding of an issue. This type of ongoing mentoring of students requires careful planning and ongoing assessment. However, the rewards of a guided inquiry approach are many. Students are more engaged when they are grappling with a question of their own making, and they develop more competencies as they work through the process of finding relevant information, evaluating that information, and analysing their findings. The guided inquiry approach in Writing 421A takes students through stages of an inquiry a step at a time. Students will learn how to navigate each stage by first following a teacher-led model of the step, and then applying the skills learned in this stage to their own inquiry project. The “Student Guide to the Inquiry Process” (appendix R) provides an easy stage-by-stage way to assess student progress during the inquiry as well as in the final stage when they present their end products.

Habits of Mind for Inquiry

Students grow as independent inquirers and critical thinkers by developing and refining learned inquiry skills, and by practising positive dispositions that support their inquiry. Habits of mind for inquiry are the attitudes or dispositions that allow a person to set aside personal bias or self-limiting beliefs that may interfere with the ability to reach newer levels of understanding. To achieve deeper understanding in any inquiry, students need to practise being

- 1) open-minded (willing to consider evidence that may oppose their own views)
- 2) fair-minded (willing to consider others’ viewpoints)
- 3) independent-minded (willing to stand up for firmly held beliefs)
- 4) critical thinkers (willing and able to question for clarity and validity).

Additional habits of mind that lead to a successful inquiry include persistence, adaptability, and the ability to collaborate. These habits of mind enable a student to deal with common obstacles that arise during an inquiry process. Persistence in pursuing information, despite challenges, will ensure a broad range of information on which to base new meaning. Adaptability allows a student to deal with possible changes related to focus questions, resources, or strategies. A willingness and ability to collaborate with others will enrich the inquiry process and lead to a broader and deeper understanding of new information for all involved.

Adapted from *Active Citizenship: Student Action Projects* (2004) and *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*, (2007), AASL.

Assessment and Evaluation

Overview

Assessment and evaluation require thoughtful planning and implementation to support the learning process and to inform teaching. All assessment and evaluation of student achievement must be based on the specific curriculum outcomes in the provincial curriculum.

Assessment involves the systematic collection of information about student learning with respect to:

- achievement of provincial curricula outcomes
- effectiveness of teaching strategies employed
- student self-reflection on learning.

Teachers are encouraged to be flexible in assessing the learning success of all students. Assessment criteria and the methods of demonstrating learning successes may vary from student to student depending on their strengths, interests, and learning styles.

Evaluation involves the weighting of the assessment information against a standard in order to make an evaluation or judgment about student achievement. Reporting of student achievement must be based on the achievement of curriculum outcomes.

There are three interrelated purposes of assessment. Each type of assessment, systematically implemented, contributes to an overall picture of an individual student's achievement.

Assessment for learning involves the use of information about student progress to support and improve student learning, inform instructional practices, and:

- is teacher-driven for student, teacher, and parent use
- occurs throughout the teaching and learning process, using a variety of tools
- engages teachers in providing differentiated instruction, feedback to students to enhance their learning, and information to parents in support of learning.

Assessment as learning actively involves student reflection on learning, monitoring of her/his own progress, and:

- supports students in critically analyzing learning related to curricular outcomes
- is student-driven with teacher guidance
- occurs throughout the learning process.

Assessment of learning involves teachers' use of evidence of student learning to make judgements about student achievement, and:

- provides opportunity to report evidence of achievement related to curricular outcomes
- occurs at the end of a learning cycle using a variety of tools
- provides the foundation for discussions on placement or promotion

Designing Effective Assessment

The assessment and evaluation strategies used in Writing 421A must support teachers in designing instruction that will best help students achieve the learning outcomes for the course and help students grow as responsible, self-confident writers.

Teachers must realize they are preparing students for a world where knowledge is expanding at a rate we can no longer track. This requires that we shift emphasis from content knowledge to information processing skills. Our students need to be able to select, process, and evaluate knowledge.

This knowledge does not always need to be tested directly on evaluations that rely strictly on the recall of facts during tests; rather, it can be encompassed in higher level objectives such as comprehension, synthesis, or application. These could be better measured through a problem-solving approach.

It is therefore important to emphasize a variety of strategies in evaluation plans. These must reflect the teaching strategies employed in the delivery of the specific topic.

Although the emphasis in Writing 421A is on the writing process, the evaluation plan should include a wide variety of assessment methods and incorporate all language arts strands. Any single item of information about a student's learning is only a minuscule sample of that individual's accomplishments. All types of learning outcomes cannot adequately be evaluated with a single type of instrument. Notions about students having different learning styles also apply to their performance on items designed for purposes of evaluation.

Evaluation strategies must closely resemble the nature of the instructional program, curriculum, and modern learning theory. There is significant movement toward authentic assessment or performance assessments. These could include such strategies as open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, placement projects, computer simulations, writing, and portfolios of students' work over time.

A multifaceted plan is needed to respond to the differences in the intended learning outcomes, the learning styles of students, and to reflect the Essential Graduation Learnings. (A listing of the essential graduation learnings is provided in *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* (1996, pp. 6-9.)

Individual learning outcomes, the criteria for success, and the form that assessment and evaluation will take, should be clearly understood by teachers, students, and parents. This involves clearly describing unit and lesson objectives and how the achievement of these objectives will be assessed. If students are to see themselves as responsible for their own learning, the requirements for attaining success in a unit of work must be clearly understood. The assessment and evaluation of the unit should contain no surprises.

Following are examples of assessment techniques:

Observation

This technique provides a way of gathering information fairly quickly while a lesson is in progress. When used formally, the student(s) would be made aware of the observation and the criteria being assessed. Informally, it could be a frequent, but brief, check on a given criterion. Observation may offer information about the participation level of a student for a given task or application of a given process. The results may be recorded in the form of checklists, rating scales or brief written notes. It is important to plan in order that specific criteria are identified, suitable recording forms are ready, and that all students are observed in a reasonable period time.

Performance

The Writing 421A curriculum encourages learning through active participation. There is a balance between process and content. It is important that teachers provide feedback on skills development throughout the course. Many activities referenced in this guide provide for students to reflect on their skill development and for teachers to assess their progress.

Journal

Although not assessed in a formal manner, journals provide opportunities for students to express thoughts and ideas, and to reflect on their transferable skills. By recording feelings, perceptions of success, and responses to new concepts, a student may be helped to identify his or her most effective learning style and skills. Knowing how to learn in an effective way is powerful information. Journal entries also give indicators of developing attitudes to concepts, processes, and skills, and how these may be applied in the contexts of society. Self-assessment, through a journal, permits a student to consider strengths and weaknesses, attitudes, interests, and transferable skills.

Conferencing

Writing 421A promotes understanding and application of concepts. Conferencing with a student allows the teacher to confirm that learning has taken place beyond simply factual recall. Discussion allows a student to display an ability to use information and clarify understanding. Conferences may be brief discussions between teacher and student or they may take places between students. Such conferences allow a student to be pro-active in displaying understanding. It is helpful for students to know which criteria will be used to assess conferences. The assessment technique provides an opportunity to students whose verbal presentation skills are stronger than their written skills.

Paper and Pencil

These techniques can be formative or summative. Several curriculum outcomes call for displaying ideas, plans, conclusions, and/or the results of research, and can be in written form for display or for direct teacher assessment. Whether as part of learning, or a final statement, students should know the expectations for the exercise and the rubric by which it will be assessed. Written assignments can be used to assess knowledge, understanding, and application of concepts. The purpose of the assessment should determine what form of pencil and paper exercise is used.

Presentation

The Writing 421A curriculum includes outcomes that require students to analyse and interpret information, to identify relationships, to work in teams, to critically reflect, and to communicate information. Many of these activities are best displayed and assessed through presentations, which can be given orally, in written/pictorial form, by project summary, or by using electronic systems such as video or computer software. Whatever the level of complexity or format used, it is important to consider the curriculum outcomes as a guide to assessing the presentation. The outcomes indicate the process, concepts, and context for which and about which a presentation is made.

Portfolio

Portfolios offer another option for assessing student progress in meeting curriculum outcomes over an extended period of time. This form of assessment allows the student to be central in the process. Decisions about the portfolio and its contents can be made by the student. What is placed in the portfolio, the criteria for selection, how the portfolio is used, how and where it is stored, and how it is evaluated are some of the questions to consider when planning to collect and display student work in this way. The portfolio should provide a long-term record of growth in learning and skills. This record of growth is important for individual reflection and self-assessment, but it is also important to share with others. For many students it is exciting to review a portfolio and see the record of development over time.

Assessment should reflect the full range of student learning in Writing 421A; involve the use of a variety of information gathering strategies that allow teachers to address students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and needs; and provide students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

Effective assessment strategies

- are explicit and are communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the school term (and at other appropriate points throughout the school year) so that students know expectations and criteria to be used to determine the level of achievement;
- must be valid in that they measure what they intend to measure;
- must be reliable in that they consistently achieve the same results when used again, or similar results with a similar group of students;
- involve students in the co-construction, interpretation, and reporting of assessment by incorporating their interests (students can select texts or investigate issues of personal interest);
- reflect where the students are in terms of learning a process or strategy, and help to determine what kind of support or instruction will follow;
- allow for relevant, descriptive, and supportive feedback that gives students clear directions for improvement;
- engage students in metacognitive self-assessment and goal setting that can increase their success as learners;
- are fair in terms of the students' background or circumstances and provide all students with the opportunity to demonstrate the extent and depth of their learning;
- accommodate the diverse needs of students with exceptionalities, including students with individual learning plans;
- assist teachers in selecting appropriate instruction and intervention strategies to promote the gradual release of responsibility;
- are transparent, pre-planned, and integrated with instruction as a component of the curriculum;
- are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of the students;
- are comprehensive and enable all students to have diverse and multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning consistently, independently, and in a range of contexts in everyday instruction;
- include samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement;
- are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning.

Reporting

Reporting on student learning should focus on the extent to which students have achieved the curriculum outcomes. Reporting involves communicating the summary and interpretation of information about student learning to various audiences who require it. Teachers have a special responsibility to explain accurately what progress students have made in their learning and to respond to parent and student inquiries about learning. Narrative reports on progress and achievement can provide information on student learning which letter or number grades alone cannot. Such reports might, for example, suggest ways in which students can improve their learning and identify ways in which teachers and parents can best provide support. Effective communication with parents regarding their children's progress is essential in fostering successful home-school partnerships. The report card is one means of reporting individual student progress. Other means include the use of conferences, notes, phone calls and electronic methods.

Guiding Principles

In order to provide accurate, useful information about the achievement and instructional needs of students, certain guiding principles for the development, administration, and use of assessments must be followed. The document *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* (1993) articulates five fundamental assessment principles, as follows:

- Assessment methods should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.
- Students should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.
- Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment strategy used, and be consistently applied and monitored.
- Procedures for summarizing and interpreting assessment results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student's performance in relation to the curriculum outcomes for the reporting period.
- Assessment reports should be clear, accurate, and of practical value to the audience for whom they are intended.

Suggested Weighting

Unit 1 - The Writing Process.....	40%
Unit 2 - The Inquiry Process	40%
Unit 3 - Write Traits.....	20%

Program Design and Components

Curriculum Framework

Although Writing 421A is a provincially developed course, it is anchored to the general curriculum outcomes for writing as described in the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum, Grades 10-12* (1996). As such, the course is designed to have students

- use writing (and other forms of representation) to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes
- use a range of strategies to develop their writing effectively and precisely.

Essential Graduation Learnings (EGLs)

Writing 421A is also linked to the essential graduation learnings for the Atlantic Canada curriculum. The outcomes for Writing 421A are most closely connected to the communication cluster of essential graduation learnings. As writers, students in Writing 421A will be required to

- explore, reflect on, and express their own ideas, learnings, perceptions, and feelings
- demonstrate understanding of facts and relationships presented through words
- present information and instructions clearly, logically, concisely, and accurately for a variety of audiences
- access, process, evaluate, and share information

Students will also be expected to *work and study purposefully both independently and in groups*, which contributes to the essential graduation learnings for personal development. In addition, they will be expected to demonstrate problem solving abilities as they

- formulate tentative ideas, and question their assumptions and those of others
- solve problems individually and collaboratively

As creators and sharers of written and electronic texts, students will be working towards technological competence when they

- locate, evaluate, adapt, create, and share information using a variety of sources and technologies
- demonstrate understanding of and use existing and developing technologies

As they explore and create other forms of representation to support their writing, they will be working toward an essential graduation learning for aesthetic expression in that they will be using *various art forms as a means of formulating and expressing ideas, perceptions, and feelings*. (A listing of the essential graduation learnings is provided in Foundation for the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* (1996, pp. 6-9.)

In the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*, (Grade 10-12), text is used to describe any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. The implication of this definition for students in Writing 421A is that, though the major emphasis will be on writing, posters, electronic texts, and illustrations may form part of their portfolio.

General Curriculum Outcomes for Writing 421A

This course is organized around three general curriculum outcomes that provide a general frame of reference for the specific curriculum outcomes that will guide unit and lesson planning. As a result of experiences in Writing 421A, students who successfully complete the course will be able to

- write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes
- integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text
- write effectively, clearly, and precisely

Specific Curriculum Outcomes for Writing 421A

The specific curriculum outcomes for Writing 421A are statements that identify what students are expected to know, be able to do, and value upon completion of the course. Performance indicators outline the key tasks and activities by which students will demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes. Unit and lesson planning by teachers should be balanced to provide a range of writing experiences addressing each outcome. Suggestions for teaching and learning are exactly that—suggestions. The intent is to provide teachers with a range of ideas from which effective instructional practices can be developed. Instructional practices can and should be designed to provide a variety of opportunities to achieve the outcomes. The appendices serve to provide teachers with additional assistance as they plan student learning experiences and assess student learning.

Summary of GCOs and SCOs

GCO 1 Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

By the end of Writing 421A, students will be expected to

- 1.1. use writing with confidence and imagination to reflect on, explain, and describe their own experiences, thoughts, ideas, and learning
- 1.2. demonstrate an understanding of the inter-relationship of content, format, and style by experimenting with various forms of expression
- 1.3. select appropriate form, style, language, and content for the specific audience and purpose
- 1.4. demonstrate an understanding of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing)
- 1.5. demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing

GCO 2 Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

By the end of Writing 421A, students will be expected to

- 2.1 conduct research into a selected topic using an inquiry process
 - 2.1.1 planning
 - 2.1.2 retrieving
 - 2.1.3 processing
 - 2.1.4 creating
 - 2.1.5 sharing
 - 2.1.6 evaluating

GCO3 Students will be expected to write effectively, clearly and precisely.

By the end of Writing 421A, students will be expected to

- 3.1 demonstrate an understanding of the traits of effective writing (ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions)
- 3.2 revise writing to improve clarity and style, using peer and teacher feedback to manipulate text
- 3.3 edit writing to eliminate errors in conventions

How to Use the Curriculum Layout

The Writing 421A curriculum has been organized into three units. Each unit begins with a two-page spread which provides the cluster of outcomes for the unit on one page. On the opposite page, performance indicators are provided which outline the key tasks and activities by which students will demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes.

This is followed by a two-page, four-column layout for each learning outcome in the unit. The following information is contained in each of the two-page, four-column layout.

Column 1: Outcomes

Column 1 contains specific curriculum outcomes for each unit, explaining what students are expected to know or be able to do within that particular task.

Column 2: Elaborations-Suggestions for Learning and Teaching

Column 2 contains elaborations for each specific curriculum outcome within the unit. Elaborations are intended to clarify the intent of the outcome as well as the intended scope of the knowledge content or skill within the outcome, where applicable. Suggested strategies for each outcome are offered, although teachers may elect to design their own strategies for any particular outcome, or modify the strategy suggested within this column.

UNIT 1: WRITING 421A	
GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.	
Outcomes	Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching
<p><i>Students will be expected to</i></p> <p>1.1 use writing with confidence and imagination to reflect on, explain, and describe their own experiences, thoughts, ideas, and learning.</p>	<p>Frequently, students will be asked to generate ideas by exploring their personal and vicarious experiences, thereby, discovering themselves and recognizing the uniqueness of their experiences and personalities (See Appendix E). Effective student writing often grows from investigation into self, from examining one's beliefs, emotions, conflicts, questions, and observations. Whereas the self is often the door to effective writing, however, it is only the entrance. Students will benefit from opportunities at this stage to discuss their ideas with others so as to refine them and reveal their potential.</p> <p>Brainstorming provides an opportunity for students to generate their thoughts. Freewriting, listing, clustering, conversation, and journal writing allow students to generate ideas and reflect upon their opinions (See Appendix D).</p> <p>Writing notebooks can be used throughout the duration of the course to allow students to reflect upon their current learning. Teachers may consider assessing the writer's notebook as a checklist or for volume or commitment. <i>Students should be encouraged to journal consistently as it is a vital element of the writing process.</i></p> <p>Students may, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read daily in class for the purpose of idea collection and the recognition of text structures and language that can be employed into their own writing. • maintain an ongoing writer's notebook where they can think freely, experiment, and begin drafting
<p><i>A word is not the same with one writer as with another. One tears it from his guts. The others pulls it out of his overcoat pocket.</i> - Charles Peguy</p>	
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Column 3: Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

This column provides suggestions for ongoing assessment that form an integral part of the learning experience. These suggestions may refer to teaching and learning tools such as visual organizers that have been provided in the appendix.

Column 4: Resources and Links

This column provides additional information for the teacher, including specific links and supplementary resources.

UNIT 1: WRITING 421A	
GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.	
Suggestions for Learning and Assessment	Resources/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a writing inventory. A writing inventory is a detailed account of you as a writer. This could be re-visited at the end of the course. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do you write during your spare time? Explain. › Do you have any favourite writers and/or favourite kinds of writing? Name them. › What kind of writing is easy for you? Discuss. › What kind of writing is challenging for you? › Where do you get your ideas for writing? › Do you have a piece of writing on which you are currently working? Give details. › Is there a piece of writing you have written in which you are especially proud? › Approximately how many draft copies of writing do you usually produce for each assignment? › What are your strengths as a writer? › What are your weaknesses as a writer? › Do you have any favourite subjects about which you enjoy writing? › What are your goals as a writer for this semester? • Respond to reading through a reading log (See Appendix J). 	<p><i>Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum</i>, 1997</p> <p><i>Write Traits Advanced Workbook, Level 1</i>, 2006</p>
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM: WRITING 421A	
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Planning, Assessing, Reporting and Weighting in Writing 421A

Writing 421A requires pre-semester planning to ensure all outcomes are addressed and process skills are integrated with content knowledge. All outcomes are inter-connected and interdependent. Any combination of outcomes can be the focus for a time frame of instruction. Teachers should look for the connections when planning and make the connections when teaching. This will support students in developing the deeper understanding needed to develop as writers.

Technically the course is comprised of only nine (9) outcomes, although there is a high level of complexity within the course structure. Outcomes are process-driven and will require critical up-front discussion and guidance at the beginning of the semester. Guided instruction and modelling are critical to the processes in the inquiry unit. Students will need to fully understand at the beginning of the course what will be expected of them as well as how they will be assessed throughout the duration of the course. Teachers are advised to spend some time during the first weeks of the course introducing students to the processes of planning a research project. This “front-loading” instructional time serves two purposes: 1) it informs students of their tasks to come, and 2) it enables students to start thinking about inquiry topics that they may wish to pursue. Ideally, by giving students the necessary process tools up front, many of them will be able to self-direct their learning as the course proceeds. This will allow the teacher to act as a process facilitator for some students while freeing up time to offer more direct assistance to others.

Assessment of learning in Writing 421A should occur formatively throughout the process stages. Assessment tools, criteria, and timelines (deadlines) should be established in advance to facilitate ongoing and informative assessment and feedback to students. Summative assessment may take place when an end-product is complete (research project). Teachers should consider the time and effort involved in all stages of a project to ensure that the end-product does not become the entire assessment.

Reporting methods and weighting of assessments should be determined before the course is underway so that students are aware of expectations. Some schools may have specific policies regarding weighting of major assessment pieces. Writing 421A is easily adaptable to a variety of assessment weightings. It is important to note that this course emphasizes the process involved in inquiry-based learning within a writing context. While specific content knowledge is important, the higher goal is in learning how writing creates meaning.

English Language Arts

Writing 421A

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

By the end of Writing 421A, students will be expected to

- 1.1 use writing with confidence and imagination to reflect on, explain, and describe their own experiences, thoughts, ideas, and learning
- 1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship of content, format, and style by experimenting with various forms of expression
- 1.3 select appropriate form, style, language, and content for the specific audience and purpose
- 1.4 demonstrate an understanding of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publication)
- 1.5 demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing.

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Performance Indicators

To demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes, students must

- complete short compositions involving each of the following genres:
 - › informational/expository writing
 - › persuasive writing
 - › personal/narrative writing
 - › business/professional writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
- complete a polished multi-paragraph composition involving one of the above genres (1.1, 1.3, 1.4) . (A multi-paragraph composition includes an introduction, body and conclusion.)
- plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish their own writing (1.4).
- keep a writer's notebook (1.1).
- participate in both peer/teacher conferences (1.5).
- create a collaborative composition (1.4, 1.5)

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.1 use writing with confidence and imagination to reflect on, explain, and describe their own experiences, thoughts, ideas, and learning.

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Frequently, students will be asked to generate ideas by exploring their personal and vicarious experiences, thereby, discovering themselves and recognizing the uniqueness of their experiences and personalities (See Appendix E). Effective student writing often grows from investigation into self, from examining one’s beliefs, emotions, conflicts, questions, and observations. Whereas the self is often the door to effective writing, however, it is only the entrance. Students will benefit from opportunities at this stage to discuss their ideas with others so as to refine them and reveal their potential.

Brainstorming provides an opportunity for students to generate their thoughts. Freewriting, listing, clustering, conversation, and journal writing allow students to generate ideas and reflect upon their opinions (See Appendix D).

Writing notebooks can be used throughout the duration of the course to allow students to reflect upon their current learning. Teachers may consider assessing the writer’s notebook as a checklist or for volume or commitment. *Students should be encouraged to journal consistently as it is a vital element of the writing process.*

Students may, for example,

- read daily in class for the purpose of idea collection and the recognition of text structures and language that can be employed into their own writing.
- maintain an ongoing writer’s notebook where they can think freely, experiment, and begin drafting

A word is not the same with one writer as with another. One tears it from his guts. The others pulls it out of his overcoat pocket.

~ Charles Peguy

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Participate in a writing inventory. A writing inventory is a detailed account of you as a writer. This could be re-visited at the end of the course.

Here are some sample introductory questions:

- › Do you write during your spare time? Explain.
 - › Do you have any favourite writers and/or favourite kinds of writing? Name them.
 - › What kind of writing is easy for you? Discuss.
 - › What kind of writing is challenging for you?
 - › Where do you get your ideas for writing?
 - › Do you have a piece of writing on which you are currently working? Give details.
 - › Is there a piece of writing you have written in which you are especially proud?
 - › Approximately how many draft copies of writing do you usually produce for each assignment?
 - › What are your strengths as a writer?
 - › What are your weaknesses as a writer?
 - › Do you have any favourite subjects about which you enjoy writing?
 - › What are your goals as a writer for this semester?
- Respond to reading through a reading log (See Appendix J).

Resources/Notes

Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum, 1997

Write Traits Advanced Workbook, Level 1, 2006

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship of content, format, and style by experimenting with various forms of expression.

The role of the writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.
 ~ Anais Nin

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Students need to learn how to construct many kinds of texts. Through experimenting with several forms of writing, students learn to make prudent decisions at each stage of the writing process.

Four forms of writing, or genres, are core components of Writing 421A:

- informational/expository
- persuasive
- personal/narrative
- business/professional writing

(See Appendices F, G, H, and I)

Forms, or genres, of writing are made distinct by purpose and audience, both of which also inform the writer’s choices involving the traits of writing (See Unit 3 and Appendices A & B). A narrative is not written for the same purpose and audience as a business letter, nor should it be written in the same voice nor have the same organizational structure. Conventions in a research paper are different than conventions in a text message. Ideas in a memoir may be reflective and supported by details from personal experience, whereas ideas and supporting detail in an expository or persuasive piece must be evidence based.

The differences between the forms of writing become much clearer and easier to discuss once students know what is meant by voice, word choice, conventions, and so on. Thus, it makes sense for teachers to focus on the forms of writing in conjunction with the process and the traits of writing. Once the student understands the traits, the distinctions between forms become clearer. (See Unit 3 and Appendices A & B).

Students may, for example,

- discuss content, format, and style of various forms of writing in a peer or teacher conference.
- discuss the purpose and audience of a various forms of writing in a peer or teacher conference.
- score writing samples on all six writing traits.

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

Informational/expository writing

- Write a letter to an author (the topic may be a concern or response to the author's work that the student would like to discuss with the author).
- Experiment with points of view in fictional and non-fictional narratives, stories, chronicles, autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, and letters.
- Evaluate expository drafts, written both collaboratively and independently, for evidence of developmental patterns.
- Create expository drafts collaboratively and independently on topics and persuasive forms of their choice.

Persuasive writing

- Write an argument recommending a decision or presenting a point of view, arranging a number of points, together with supporting evidence, in a persuasive manner.
- Discuss, in small groups, examples of persuasive writing (editorials, advertisements, debates, persuasive essays, letters of application, and reviews) which demonstrate emotional appeal and logical argument
- Generate persuasive topics/issues using pre-writing strategies.
- Create persuasive drafts collaboratively and independently on topics and persuasive forms of their choice.

Personal/narrative writing

- Write an obituary and/or a eulogy for a prominent figure.
- Experiment with narrative forms: folk tale, myth, fable, parable, legend, ballad.
- Experiment with points of view in fictional and non-fictional narratives, stories, chronicles, autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, and letters.
- Write a children's story.
- Write a monologue or dialogue.

Business/professional writing

- Write letters of support, complaint, inquiry, or request focusing on tone and voice.
- Prepare resumes, reports, memos.

Writing Conferences

Here are some sample conference questions:

- Who is the intended audience for this piece?
- What is your purpose in writing this piece?
- How much does your audience already know about the topic?
- How will you ensure that your audience remains interested?
- Does your audience expect to be informed/entertained/persuaded?
- What information does your audience expect/need?
- Is the form suited to your purpose and audience?

Resources/Notes

Write Traits Advanced Workbook, Level 1, 2006

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.3 select appropriate form, style, language, and content for the specific audience and purpose

And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.
-Sylvia Plath

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Some students may find it difficult to imagine any audience for in-school writing other than a teacher, or a purpose other than earning a grade (See Appendix K). These students will gain a sense of audience only through having to write for a variety of audiences. For example, students may practise switching audiences by writing a short piece recommending a change in school policy (dress code, exam schedule, graffiti wall) and then modifying it to suit a principal, a parent, and a close friend. For these audiences to become “real,” they must be given opportunity to read the piece and, where possible, provide feedback to the writer.

Students may, for example,

- work in small groups to compare the effects of form, style, language and content whenever possible.
- find examples of writing forms: menus, newspapers, application forms, directions and discuss the different audience in each.
- use mentor texts to identify the elements of good writing.

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Write a letter to three different audiences on the same topic.
- Write a reflective notebook entry discussing the differences between the three audiences.
- Write letters to the editor of various newspapers focussing on different audiences.
- Write blog entries.

Resources/Notes

Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum, 1997

Write Traits Advanced Workbook, Level 1

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.4 demonstrate an understanding of the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publication)

I encourage my students to conduct fieldwork on their own cultures and themselves. Together we can take dictation from the world.

~ Kim Stafford

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

The writing process is the experience of working with language, of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and producing (and possibly publishing) work; the product of writing is the actual piece of student text. The writing process is an explicit focus of Writing 421A instruction.

The writing process is not purely linear nor does one any one stage exist in isolation. New ideas may emerge during revision or editing and will need to be drafted; a piece of writing may need to be reorganized several times; drafting and revising often occur simultaneously. Moreover, there is a great variety in how individual writers move among the stages. As they reflect on process and learn specific strategies and skills associated with each stage in the process, students will become more aware of writing as a craft and of their individual strengths, needs, and development as writers.

Teaching or reviewing key concepts, such as the traits of effective writing will be necessary during this outcome (See outcomes 3.1,3.2 and 3.3 for more information on the traits).

Prewriting

Students may, for example,

- experiment with thinking techniques, both individually and collaboratively in conferencing sessions (See Appendices L, M, N.).
- discuss and incorporate strategies to encourage free thinking, either free association techniques (freewriting, brainstorming, listing, visualization, clustering) or more structured techniques (graphic organizers).

Drafting

Students may, for example,

- share early drafts with others, perhaps by reading passages aloud in a group.
- allow a draft to percolate for two or three days before returning to it with new ideas and a fresh perspective.

Revising

Students may, for example,

- write another opening to the piece or a new topic sentence to a paragraph. Compare it with the original.
- note the words that produce voice or tone and change them if necessary.
- choose some of the shorter sentences and paragraphs, adding more detail if necessary.
- incorporate transitional words and phrases to increase fluency and flow.
- rewrite some of the sentences in search of improved flow.

Editing

Students may, for example,

- use an editing checklist during the writing process.
- participate in peer editing opportunities with a focus on targeted errors (capitalization, commas, agreement problems).

Publishing

Students may, for example,

- publish their finished products and receive feedback from peers in small group discussion.
- share their portfolios with other students (See Appendix Q).

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Take a piece of writing from the pre-writing stage to publication.
- Create “portfolio partners” and provide written feedback or suggestions to one another. (See Appendix Q.)
- Create a visual (poster, graphic organizers, etc.) that explains the writing process.
- Create and share online work using Google docs.

Resources/Notes

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition.brainstorm_freewrite.htm
(Freewriting Website)

<http://www.ttms.org> (*Teaching That Makes Sense*)

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.5 demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing

Easy reading is damn hard writing.
~Nathaniel Hawthorne

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

The purpose of this outcome is to have students demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing. Teachers need to work with students to define critical and creative thinking and how they might improve their skills to better demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing.

Students could support each other as they develop critical and creative writing skills through peer and self-assessment and pre-writing and post-writing activities.

The writing portfolio is an integral component of Writing 421A, and it allows students to demonstrate their continued growth in critical and creative thinking. Students are asked to complete both self-reflections and general reflections on their work. Inducing thoughtful and specific reflection from students is a challenge and will require explicit instruction, modeling, and patience. See Appendix J for specific reflection prompts.

Students may, for example,

- write freely in a journal.
- use a graphic organizer to arrange ideas.

Revision should be regarded as an opportunity to make critical choices about style and content and about how information can be arranged to make writing more effective.

Students may, for example,

- complete a self-assessment of their writing.
- work in small groups during the revision process.

Here are some guiding questions that allow students to think critically and creatively about their own work:

- Have I hooked my reader?
- Is the content interesting?
- Is the style natural, clear, and effective at getting my message across?
- Are there any places where the writing could be more fluent?
- Look at word choice, sentence structure, focus, beginning, and ending. Have I made effective choices?
- Is there too much information?
- Are my ideas fresh and interesting?
- Are my sentences and words clear?

(continued)

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Create two distinct beginnings for a narrative piece.
- Write a narrative and illustrate it as a children's book.
- Create a class short story.
- Create a small group story from a song, poem, or piece of artwork.
- Contrast two pieces of writing from the same genre using the traits or writing.
- Complete a writing portfolio to demonstrate growth in both creative and critical thinking. It may consist of three or four samples, accompanied by reflections, or it may be elaborate, consisting of several pieces including drafts, assignments, tests, homework, and other types of media (artwork, posters, music, digitalized audio and video or e-portfolios).

Resources/Notes

*Write Traits Advanced Workbook,
Level 1, 2006*

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

1.5 demonstrate critical and creative thinking in their writing. *(continued)*

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

- Is the genre or form I have chosen the most effective way to make my point? Would another genre be more effective?
- Does my voice come through in the writing?
- Is my pace sufficient to keep the reader interested?
- Where does the draft need to be cut? Lengthened?
- Have I said what I wanted to say?
- Is the order in which I have written my ideas effective?

Editing/Proofreading

Editing is the final step before possible publication. Once students have revised the final draft, they must go through it with a critical eye to clarify meaning and strive for technical competence. Effective editing involves several thorough readings of the writing, and it may involve collaboration.

GCO1. Students will be expected to write, both independently and collaboratively, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Participate in collaborative revision conferences with peers or teacher. (See Appendices L, M, N.).
- Participate in collaborative editing conferences with peers or teacher. (See Appendices L, M, N.).

Use the following editing checklist:

- Maintain an active voice whenever possible.
- Use concise and appropriate diction and ascertain that diction and tone are supportive of each other.
- Vary sentence lengths and styles.
- Check for spelling and punctuation errors.
- Use a variety of beginnings and endings.
- Ensure consistent structure, verb tense, and point of view.
- Avoid clichés; use fresh and dynamic language.
- Use figurative language, sound devices, and imagery.
- Read aloud to hear pace, voice, and style within the writing.
- Show rather than tell whenever possible.
- Read for focus and eliminate whatever does not contribute to the focus of the writing.

Resources/Notes

Unit 2: Inquiry

Overview

Inquiry

This unit requires students to follow a guided inquiry process that will result in a final product based upon research into an issue of particular interest. While the end product is an important part of the work, the inquiry process is significant due to the scope and range of skills required to complete the process. Therefore, this unit focusses on the process of inquiry, the synthesis of prior and background information with new information, and potentially the sharing of the product by way of a public presentation. Assessment is also an important part of the inquiry process and will involve having students reflect upon their own work as well as that of others. The “Student Guide to the Inquiry Process” is provided to enable teachers to model each stage of inquiry and guide students in their own inquiries. The guide also provides a means of assessing process skills at various milestones during the inquiry process. The guide is organized according to the six stages involved in the achievement of the outcome for the unit.

There are many topics from which to select for further research. Throughout the course, students will be expected to choose a topic or issue through class discussion and inquiry. Teachers are encouraged to model each stage and guide students through the various aspects of the inquiry method as the class proceeds through the unit.

As part of the inquiry study for this unit, students will be expected to conduct research into one topic following an inquiry process. Prior to assigning the independent inquiry project, and throughout the course of the inquiry, teachers will need to provide guidance on inquiry and research processes, along with expectations related to documentation of sources, plagiarism, formatting, and other issues (including ethical issues) related to research and writing. The inquiry unit of this document provides teachers with broad ideas about the inquiry process as well as more detailed information related to each stage of the process.

Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Unit 2: Inquiry

Students will be expected to

- 2.1 conduct research into a topic using an inquiry process
 - 2.1.1 Planning
 - 2.1.2 Retrieving
 - 2.1.3 Processing
 - 2.1.4 Creating
 - 2.1.5 Sharing
 - 2.1.6 Evaluating

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected topic using an inquiry process

2.1.1 Planning

- **identify topic area for inquiry**
- **identify possible information sources**
- **identify audience and presentation format**
- **establish evaluation criteria**
- **outline a plan for inquiry**

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

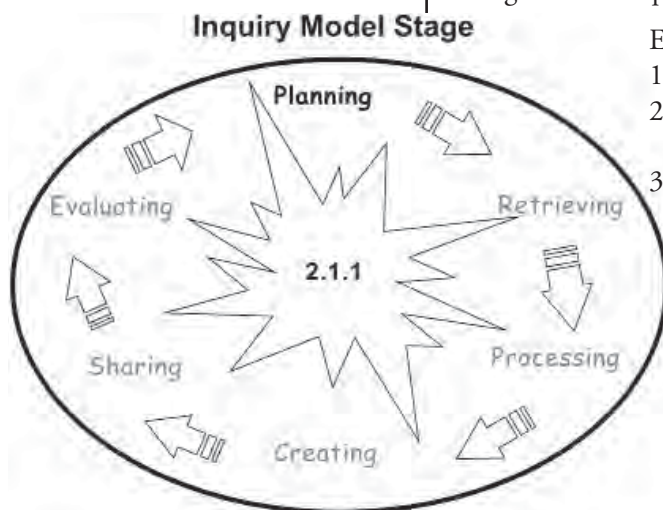
Getting Underway

Students begin the inquiry process by thinking about broad areas of interest. At this point, some preliminary research and an opportunity to discuss with others will help students to acquire general knowledge in their field of interest. Students should be encouraged to raise and record questions as they work their way through the early stages of the inquiry. It is critical to allow enough time for this important step in the process so that students can think about and reflect upon new information, and synthesize this with their prior knowledge. Other considerations for teachers will be the length of the research paper, allotted time in class to work on the inquiry, and sufficient time for completing the finished products. Assessment and evaluation should be discussed with students at the beginning of the inquiry process so that students know exactly what is expected of them and when. Appendix R shows how a topic can be narrowed to an inquiry question or thesis statement that can be effectively addressed through student research.

Students should become familiar with and develop a working knowledge of Koha, their school library database.

EBSCO Host is an on-line database that is part of every school library/ information system. It houses magazines, newspapers, academic journals, news wires, books, encyclopedias, government transcripts, and many more published sources. When planning an inquiry project, it is important that students utilize a variety of reliable sources (primary and secondary) for their purposes.

A working knowledge of how to access and manage searches through a database such as EBSCO is a lifelong skill that will enable students to find a variety of academic sources for any application. Teachers can encourage the use of on-line databases by modelling searches and guiding students in setting up accounts and folders. Assessments can be made at various points throughout the inquiry process to ensure that students are on track.



EBSCO Host - Quick-Start Instructions for Students

- 1) Go to <http://search.ebscohost.com/>
- 2) UserID: peiebsco; Password: database
Note: This allow access to all areas of EBSCOhost.
- 3) Select: Student Research Centre

N.B.

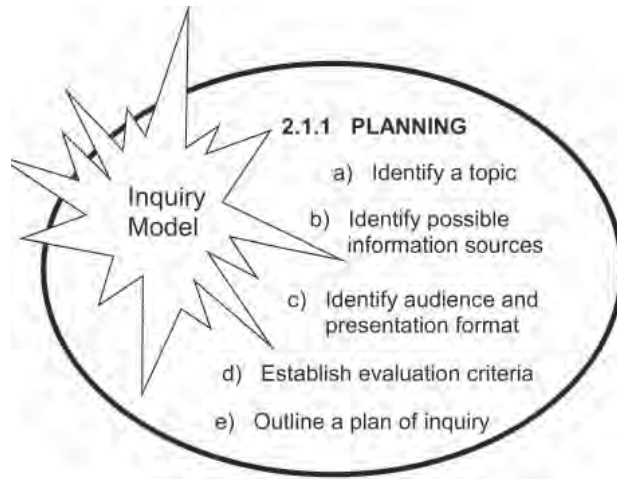
- Searches may be filtered by source (magazine, newspaper, etc.)
- Searches may be narrowed down by subject and sub-topic
- Search results appear in order of most recent first but can be re-sorted according to relevance
- Each article contains a link to HTML Full Text Article

See appendix R “Student Guide to the Inquiry Process”

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Select a topic.
- Develop an inquiry question.
- Develop a working thesis.
- Identify possible relevant sources.
- Develop a plan for inquiry.



Resources/Notes

Canadian High School Writer's Guide, (Pearson Education, Canada).

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected issue using an inquiry process

2.1.2 Retrieving

- **develop an information retrieval plan**
- **locate and collect resources**
- **select relevant information**

(continued)

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Selecting Information Sources

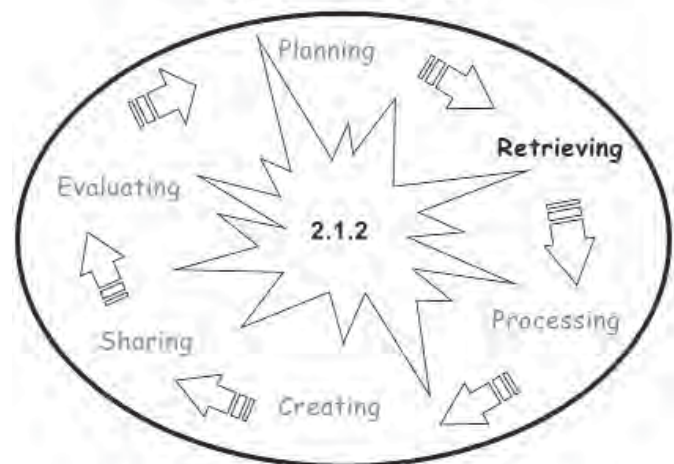
The inquiry process involves searching for reliable sources of information in order to collect enough data to formulate a balanced answer to a query. The World Wide Web is likely one of the first places students will search, although students should be encouraged to try out a variety of sources. In Writing 421A, students are expected to use credible sources, some of which may be found on the Web. Some commonly used guiding questions may help students to make the most of their surfing time. Researching contemporary issues may require extensive use of the Web in order to find the most current information available. Students should be cautious in their searches and follow guidelines to ensure that the sites they access are appropriate, reliable, and worth their time searching. See appendix S—Sample guiding questions for evaluating sources.

Selecting relevant sources can be a time-consuming and confusing task. Students should be reminded to select primary sources where possible and to view secondary resources with a critical eye.

Encourage students to use graphic organizers, spreadsheets, or

some other means of keeping track of their searches to stay organized and to avoid becoming overwhelmed with the magnitude of information available.

Inquiry Model Stage



Assessment Tool Idea

This tool is meant to be a concise record of sources that contains a minimum of information, but is valuable as a quick reference during several stages of the inquiry process. There are basically three parts:

- 1) citation information (title, author, publisher, date, pages)
- 2) summary of source (two-four sentences only)
- 3) description of how source will help inquiry (one-two sentences only)

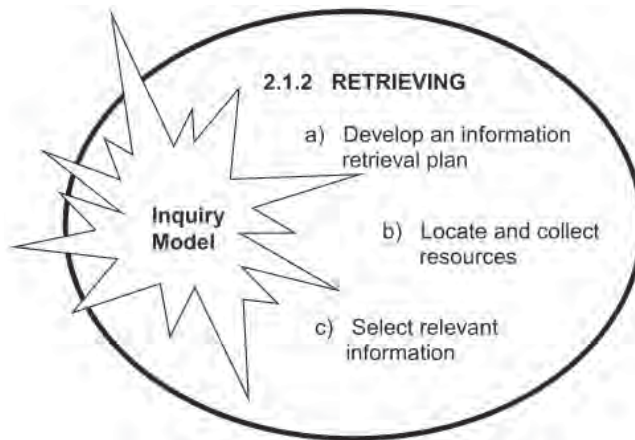
*This last step is very important as the student must think critically to clarify how exactly the source (or which parts of the source) will help to support his or her inquiry.

(continued)

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Complete a working words cited review.
- Participate in works cited peer editing.
- Defend the validity of a source using the Evaluating Student Sources Guided Practice (appendices R & S).
- Interview a researcher.



Resources/Notes

Supplementary Resources

Canadian High School Writer's Guide

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected issue using an inquiry process

2.1.2 retrieving

- **evaluate information**
- **review and revise the plan for inquiry**

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Evaluating Sources

An inquiry search can lead to a multitude of sources which can quickly become overwhelming to a reader. An important part of learning how to follow the inquiry process is to know how to evaluate sources for their usefulness and quality. Students can become more practised at this if they follow some simple guidelines taking into consideration specific characteristics of each source.

Relevance

Is the material closely related to the topic, general or specific?

Reliability

What author or organization is publishing or promoting the information. Follow the same guidelines here as for selecting appropriate World Wide Web sites.

Timeliness

Is the information up-to-date for the topic? Does it need to be current or are there historical aspects that are useful?

Availability

Is it easy to access the material when you need it?

Objectivity and Bias

Does the material present a balanced view or is there an obvious bias on the part of the author? Is the source promoting a particular viewpoint or product?

Quantity

Is there too much or too little to be of use, given the allotted time frame for the inquiry?

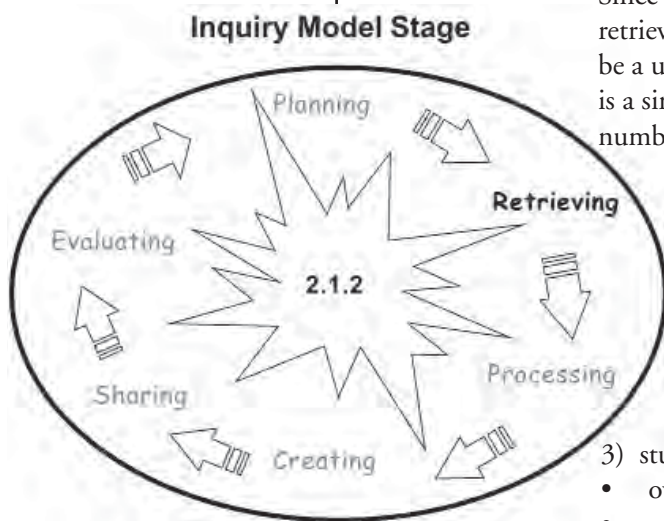
(Adapted from *Canadian High School Writer's Guide*)

Assessment Tool Idea: Works Cited Review

Since students will likely use the World Wide Web to retrieve much of their information, a webliography can be a useful tool. Similar to an annotated bibliography, it is a simple way to keep searches limited to a manageable number while being forced to think critically about the usefulness of each site. Five to eight sources (variable) might be appropriate.

A typical works cited review includes the following information:

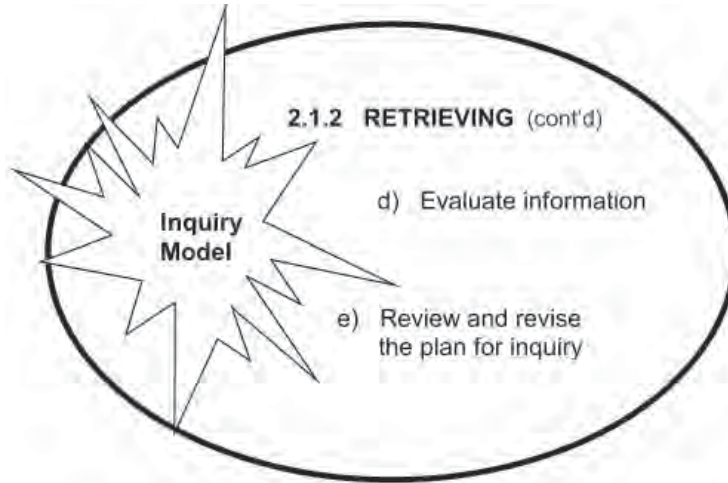
- 1) title, author (if available), and URL of each site
- 2) brief (unbiased) summary of the Website (two to three sentences)
- 3) student review of the site (three to four sentences)
 - overall purpose and reliability of the site
 - ease of navigation
 - strong/weak features
 - how the site will support the particular inquiry.



GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Complete a works cited review.
- Participate in peer conferencing.



Resources/Notes

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

Supplementary Resources

Canadian High School Writer's Guide p. 234

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected global issue using an inquiry process

2.1.3 Processing

- **establish a focus for inquiry**
- **choose pertinent information**
- **record information**
- **make connections and inferences**
- **review and revise the plan for inquiry**

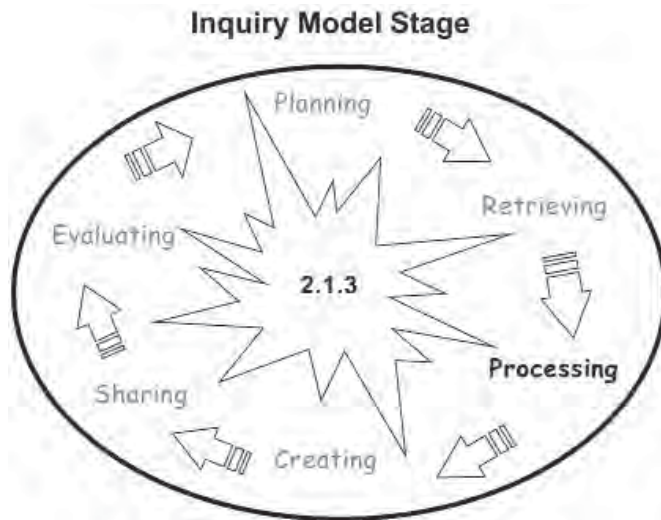
Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Finalizing the Focus

Selecting the right information for the inquiry is a critical step. If there is too little information, students may be inclined to include everything they find. In this case, it may be necessary to revise or broaden the inquiry. If there is too much information, students may become overwhelmed; they therefore need to know how to select only the most pertinent pieces. Skills useful in completing this stage of the inquiry include summarizing, paraphrasing, and notemaking. These skills are similar in nature but have subtle degrees of difference.

“Notemaking” means condensing information from either audio or print sources by using key words/points and discrete pieces of information. Depending upon subject and learner preferences, notemaking may follow either a linear style or a patterned style.

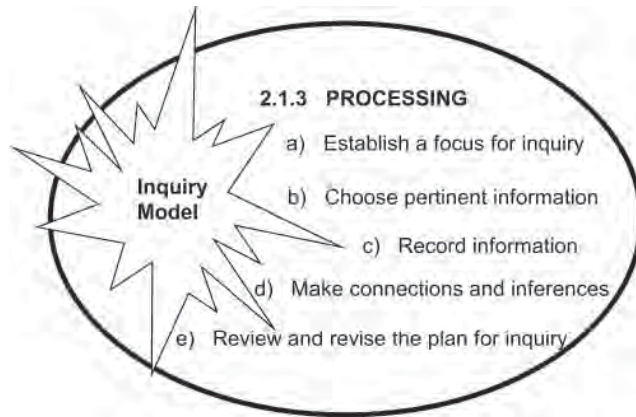
See appendix T for information on summarizing, paraphrasing, and notemaking.



GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Complete a summary of a chose source.
- Complete a paraphrase of a chosen source.
- Complete note cards from chosen sources.
- Use Google docs to peer edit.
- Participate in a blog to share revised/edited work.



Resources/Notes

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

Supplementary Resources

Canadian High School Writer's Guide

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected issue using an inquiry process

2.1.4 Creating

- **organize information**
- **create a product**
- **think about the audience**
- **revise and edit**
- **review and revise the plan for inquiry**

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Creating New Knowledge

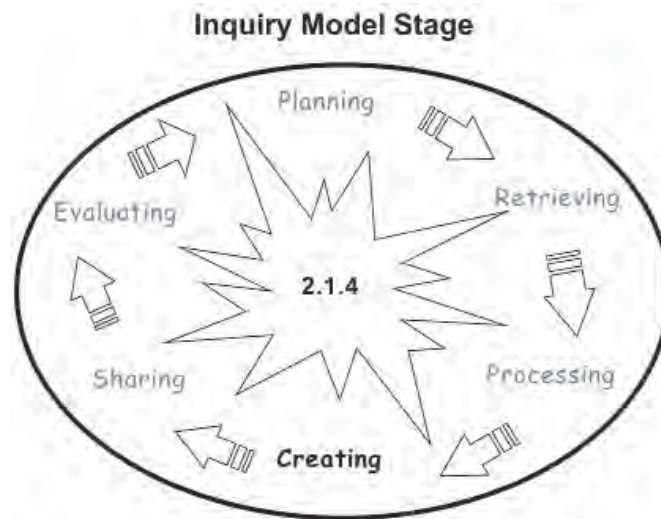
New knowledge comes from building upon prior knowledge with new information that has been uncovered during the inquiry search. Once students have identified and evaluated sources of information, they embark upon the organizing stage of the process. They must be able to analyse and interpret the information they have found and turn it into a format that is coherent for others. This is point in the process that looping back and forth is most likely to occur. At this stage, students will sort ideas, possibly using graphic organizers to aid in the process, and construct new meaning that they will transfer to a written format.

Moving from Data Collection to Product

Organizing information can be an onerous task unless there is some sort of system for organizing or classifying data. Graphic organizers can be helpful for this task and there are a multitude of these available to suit every purpose. Use a search engine to find others on various on-line sites. Following an outline created in the planning stage will also help students to organize and interpret their findings in a final writing product.

See appendix B, “Write Traits Rubric”. Teachers may create rubrics in advance, or craft rubrics with students so that they will be well aware of assessment criteria for their projects.

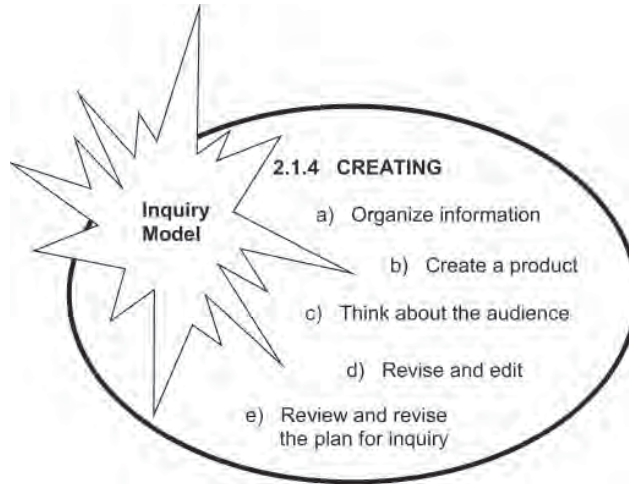
See appendix R “Student Guide to the Inquiry Process”.



GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Complete a formal outline.
- Complete a first draft.
- Revise and edit your first draft.
- Complete and participate in peer conferencing and teacher conferencing.



Resources/Notes

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

Supplementary Resources

Canadian High School Writer's Guide

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected issue using an inquiry process

2.1.5 Sharing

- **communicate with the audience**
- **present new understandings**
- **demonstrate appropriate audience behaviour**

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

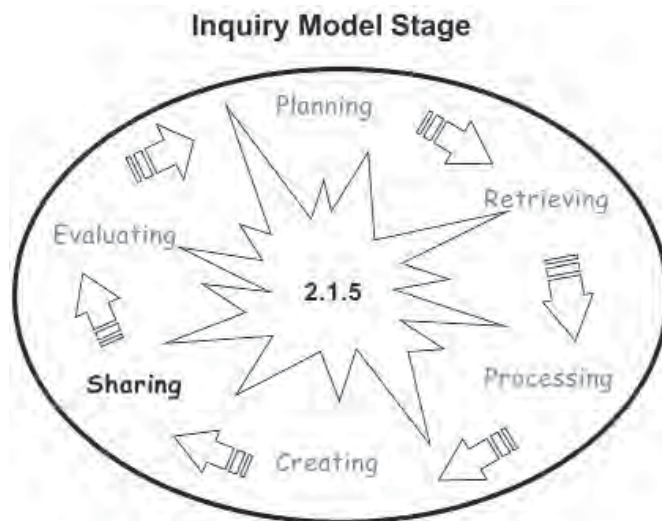
Communicating New Understandings

For many students, the presentation aspect of an inquiry project can be very challenging. Presenting in front of one’s peers requires skill and confidence which may come easily to some but not to all. It is important to create a safe, non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom for all students. Teachers may initiate some class discussion around appropriate audience behaviours, or create an audience task—such as peer assessment strategies—to ensure a positive environment for all. Some review of effective delivery strategies—such as maintaining eye contact, and stance in relation to the audience—may be helpful.

In Writing 421A, it is important for students to have an opportunity to share their work throughout the inquiry process. Students may share their first drafts with peers in a small group setting or students can share their research finding to the larger group. Creativity should be encouraged.

Time must also be built into the overall schedule to allow for the sharing sessions. Generally, presentations do not need to be lengthy to be effective—5 to 10 minutes may be ample time for a student to present his or her new understandings without being so long that the audience loses focus. Students should be encouraged to ask questions during presentation periods. Incorporating just a few presentations per class into other work will also help students to stay attentive.

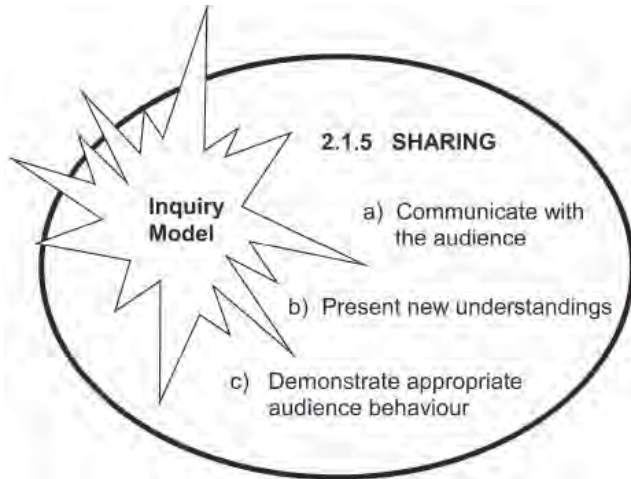
See appendix R “Student Guide to the Inquiry Process”.



GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Share a final draft in small peer groups or larger groups (See appendices L, M and N).
- Share research in the form of a panel discussion.
- Participate in an informal researched debate.
- Share research with students/staff outside of the classroom.



Resources/Notes

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

Supplementary Resources

Canadian High School Writer's Guide

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

2.1 conduct research into a selected issue using an inquiry process

2.1.6 Evaluating

- **evaluate the product**
- **evaluate the inquiry process and inquiry plan**
- **review and revise personal inquiry model**
- **transfer learning to new situations**

Elaboration – Strategies for Learning and Teaching

Completing the Cycle of Learning

The final phase of the inquiry process is evaluation. Learning through inquiry is not a linear process. The cyclical nature of inquiry should evoke new understandings and new questions for further inquiry.

This stage is intended to have students think about what they have learned and, just as importantly, how they have learned (metacognition). It is an opportunity for students to take pride in what they have accomplished, and to ponder how they progressed from a question or a thesis statement to a polished final product, new knowledge, and more queries. Students are asked to reflect upon their learning throughout the inquiry process and, at this stage, to reflect upon the process as a whole.

GCO2. Students will be expected to use writing to integrate information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to create original text.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Submit your final product.
- Complete a self-assessment on the process of inquiry.
- Reflect upon the inquiry process in the writer's notebook.
- Videotape presentations for further critiquing.

Resources/Notes

PBL Starter Kit, Buck Institute for Education

<http://www.bie.org>

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313361/focusoninquiry.pdf>

GCO3. Students will be expected to write effectively, clearly, and precisely.

By the end of Writing 421A, students will be expected to

- 3.1 demonstrate an understanding of the traits of effective writing (ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions)
- 3.2 revise writing to improve clarity and style, using peer and teacher feedback to manipulate text
- 3.3 edit writing to eliminate errors in conventions

GCO3. Students will be expected to write effectively, clearly, and precisely.

Performance Indicators

To demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes, students must

- identify specific strengths and weaknesses in their own and others' writing and refer to them using the traits language during peer and teacher conferences (3.1, 3.2).
- diagnose weaknesses and identify strengths in their own writing and others' writing and revise with purpose (3.1, 3.2, 3.3).
- submit drafts along with some final copies to demonstrate effective editing and restructuring skills (3.1, 3.2, 3.3).
- submit final products in which, increasingly often, the conventions of written language are used correctly (3.3).

GCO3. Students will be expected to write effectively, clearly, and precisely.

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the traits of effective writing (ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions)

3.2 revise writing to improve clarity and style, using peer and teacher feedback to manipulate text

3.3 edit writing to eliminate errors in conventions

Learn as much by writing as by reading.

-Lord Acton

Strategies for Learning and Teaching

The traits of writing is commonly used to refer to the individual components that provide the foundation of good writing. The six traits include: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions (See Appendix A).

In Writing 421A, an emphasis on the traits informs writing instruction and assessment and reinforces the introduction to the traits students receive in elementary and intermediate grades. A focus on the traits of writing complements a process-based approach to writing instruction and provides clarity, in particular, to the revision stage of the writing process.

Introduce the traits for effective writing early in the semester and emphasize their role as a key component of the course. Use the traits terminology consistently during modeling and conferencing activities throughout the term.

Students who know the six traits have a full repertoire of strategies allowing them to revise with purpose. Teachers should have students focus on one or two traits at a time during revision activities. A student who is asked to revise a piece only for word choice (or for verbs or adjectives only), for example, will find the task understandable and doable, much more so than simply asked to revise, as this request too often leads only to fixing spelling and punctuation, an editing task. Thorough and comprehensive revision is possible only after students can identify and work with the individual traits.

Teachers should focus on form only after process and after traits.

Students may, for example,

- discuss short passages from student or teacher writing, manipulating some aspect of the writing and explaining how the changes improve clarity and style.
- reflect on their revisions and periodically provide – either orally or in writing- a brief description of one or two specific changes made to a draft and explain why they made the changes.
- apply grammar principles in their own writing through activities involving sentence combining or mentor sentences (See Appendices O & P).
- identify patterns of errors in their writing (verb tense shifts, apostrophes, agreement errors) and work on one or two patterns at a time.
- use the traits rubric to mark sample pieces of writing.
- read their writing aloud to help identify necessary revisions and corrections.

GCO3. Students will be expected to write effectively, clearly, and precisely.

Suggestions for Learning and Assessment

- Revise a piece of personal writing for a public audience. Take particular note of sentence length, complexity, and accessibility.
- Complete a self-assessment which asks you to assess your own effective use of the writing traits or the extent to which you incorporate peer and teacher suggestions provided during writing conferences.

Resources/Notes

*Write Traits Advanced Workbook,
Level 1, 2006*

Appendices

Appendix A

The Traits of Writing

The Traits of Writing

Ideas: the content, including the main themes or ideas and supporting detail

Organization: the structure, including introduction, conclusion, transitions, and pacing

Voice: the writer's personality, including passion for the topic, appropriateness, and honesty

Word Choice: the selection of precise and appropriate diction to achieve meaning, detail, and imagery

Sentence Fluency: the craft of shaping and varying sentence structure and syntax for effect and clarity

Conventions: the recognized rules of spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage, capitalization, and paragraphing

Appendix B

Six Traits of Writing Rubric

Six Traits Writing Rubric

	6 Exemplary	5 Strong	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Ideas & Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>main theme</i> • <i>supporting details</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evident main idea with some support which may be general or limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea may be cloudy because detail is too general or even off-topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>structure</i> • <i>introduction</i> • <i>conclusion</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively organized in logical and creative manner • Creative and engaging intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong order and structure • Inviting intro and satisfying closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization is appropriate, but conventional • Attempt at introduction and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts at organization; may be a “list” of events • Beginning and ending not developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of structure; disorganized and hard to follow • Missing or weak intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coherence; confusing • No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>personality</i> • <i>sense of audience</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressive, engaging, sincere • Strong sense of audience • Shows emotion: humour, honesty, suspense or life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate to audience and purpose • Writer behind the words comes through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evident commitment to topic • Inconsistent or dull personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent • Writing may seem mechanical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing tends to be flat or stiff • Little or no hint of writer behind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is lifeless • No hint of the writer
Word Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>precision</i> • <i>effectiveness</i> • <i>imagery</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise, carefully chosen • Strong, fresh, vivid images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive, broad range of words • Word choice energizes writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is functional and appropriate • Descriptions may be overdone at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words may be correct but mundane • No attempt at deliberate choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited range of words • Some vocabulary misused
Sentence Fluency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>rhythm, flow</i> • <i>variety</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of craftsmanship • Effective variation in sentence patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy flow and rhythm • Good variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally in control • Lack variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some awkward constructions • Many similar patterns and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often choppy • Monotonous sentence patterns • Frequent run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to follow or read aloud • Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>age appropriate, spelling, caps, punctuation, grammar</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong control of conventions; errors are few and minor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of most writing conventions; occasional errors with high risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited control of conventions; frequent errors do not interfere with understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent significant errors may impede readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read

*Adapted for Regina Public Schools from Vicki Spandel, Creating Writers.
Regina, SK Canada*

Appendix C

**Strategies for Effective
Writing Instruction**

Strategies for Effective Writing Instruction

The list below summarizes the results of a large-scale statistical review of research (*Writing Next, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006*) to identify the most effective instructional practices for teaching writing to adolescents. The following eleven teaching strategies were found to have a significant positive impact on student writing.

1. **Writing Strategies**, which involves teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions
2. **Summarization**, which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts
3. **Collaborative Writing**, which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions
4. **Specific Product Goals**, which assigns students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete
5. **Word Processing**, which uses computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments
6. **Sentence Combining**, which involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences
7. **Prewriting**, which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition
8. **Inquiry Activities**, which engages students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task
9. **Process Writing Approach**, which interweaves a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing
10. **Study of Models**, which provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing
11. **Writing for Content Learning**, which uses writing as a tool for learning content material

(The complete report is available from the *Alliance for Excellent Education* website. Summary provided by the *National Writing Project*.)

Appendix D

Pre-writing Strategies

Pre-writing Strategies

Brainstorming: Students spontaneously list words and thoughts, within a structured time frame, on a particular subject or topic to be explored. All ideas should be encouraged and accepted; students should not be concerned with linear thinking. *Students should be encouraged to journal consistently as it is a vital element of the writing process.*

Freewriting: Students explore a topic within a structured time frame by writing without stopping for a period of 5-10 minutes, recording any thoughts, ideas, words, or phrases that are connected to the topic. At the end of the allotted time frame, students assess what they have written and determine if there is enough meaningful information to proceed with a draft copy or experiment with another possible topic.

Listing: Students freely list ideas as they come to mind. They start with an idea or word that is related to a writing assignment/topic and begin listing words which might belong in that category. Students may generate lists from the following:

- Explore memories
- Visualize a favourite place and describe the details
- Describe physical surroundings
- Write about a special person
- Write about a life-changing event

Appendix E

Preliminary Diagnostic Assessment

Preliminary Diagnostic Assessment

It is recommended that, at the beginning of the term in Writing 421A, the teacher provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their current writing ability through a short writing activity (e.g., 1 typed page). This is not intended to be a highly sophisticated diagnostic tool, but rather a means by which teachers can obtain a general perception of the students' strengths and weaknesses in such areas as organization, sentence structure, mechanics, spelling, vocabulary and focus. Students should be encouraged both to keep this piece of writing in their portfolios and to refer to it periodically as they see their writing improve. Following are some suggested possible writing prompts:

- Write a letter of introduction to your teacher in which you discuss your family, interests, hobbies / part-time jobs, extra-curricular activities, and short / long term goals.
- Reflect on a memorable event in your childhood that helped shape you into the person you are today.
- Write about the most important thing in the world to you.
- Examine and describe a photo or a picture from a magazine (student or teacher chosen).
- Defend this statement: High school students should wear uniforms.
- Select 4 or 5 random nouns (i.e. wave, tunnel, ghost, scarf) and create a piece of writing in which each word is used at least once.

Note: This writing activity should not be assigned a numerical value.

Appendix F

Informational/Expository Writing

Informational/Expository Writing

Informational writing generally relies upon in-depth research or extensive personal experience. Its purpose is to teach or inform from a perspective of expertise. Effective informational writing draws and synthesizes evidence from several reliable sources, all of which must be accurately quoted, paraphrased, and/or cited. Other essential features of informational writing include

- A clear topic sentence or thesis statement, that effectively focuses the audience on the topic or issue.
- Support or evidence in the form of facts, statistics, anecdotes, quotations from credible sources
- A reasoned discussion or clear argument that is carefully thought out or methodically researched.

Some other kinds of expository writing may be more spontaneous and may not rely on formal research. For instance, students may choose to write about topics of personal interest involving personal experiences or observations (what they noticed during a first-time trip to Montreal or how to compete successfully at a video game).

Literary analysis is expository writing in which a writer examines details in a story, novel, or poem that might otherwise go overlooked. It may focus on themes or issues, examine character motivation or development, or draw parallels between the literature and daily experience.

Some other common examples of informational/expository writing include newspaper or journal articles, informational brochures, research summaries, textbooks, cookbooks, how-to manuals, and lab reports.

As they fulfil the research paper requirement, students in Writing 421A will complete some formal informational writing. Teachers are encouraged, however, to seek opportunities for students to experiment with other types of informational/expository writing, allowing students to select topics and types that interest them.

Appendix G

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing is informational writing with attitude. Its purpose is to examine an issue thoroughly, to take a side, and to persuade the reader to agree with the writer. The writer may provide various perspectives on an issue but will clearly prefer one, providing informed argument and compelling evidence in defense of it. Effective persuasion considers, and refutes, counter-arguments.

Otherwise, similar to informational/expository writing, the key features of persuasive writing include

- a clear statement of thesis or opinion
- evidence to support the thesis (facts, statistics, anecdotes, quotations from credible sources)
- acknowledgment of opposing viewpoints and a rebuttal of them
- sometimes, a call to action

Although persuasive writing may be passionate and may appeal to a reader's emotions, its purpose ideally is to persuade through reason and logic.

Some common examples of persuasive writing include advertisements, debates, movie reviews, restaurant reviews, book reviews, sermons, speeches, editorials, letters to the editor, and blogs.

Appendix H

Personal/Narrative Writing

Personal/Narrative Writing

Narrative writing tells a story. Its purpose is most often to entertain. It has a setting and characters, one of whom may be the narrator, and a plot structure that builds to a high point before providing a resolution. Often, it includes tension—a problem or challenge to be overcome. Nonfiction narrative writing may tell a person’s life story or recount an important historical event or news story.

Personal writing involves recollections, thoughts, and feelings that are personally important to the writer. Its purpose may simply be to record—in the form of memoir, for instance—events, feelings, or impressions personal to the writer. Students may be reluctant to share personal writing and should not be made to do so.

Key features of personal/narrative writing include

- effective openings and conclusions
- focus on specific action and concrete detail
- vivid description of setting and character (“showing” as opposed to “telling”)
- literary devices such as simile, metaphor, flashback, irony, and symbol
- in personal writing, reflection and honesty

Some common examples of personal/narrative writing include short stories, novels, narrative picture books, journals, fables, travelogues, memoirs, biographies, news stories, blogs, and tweets.

Appendix I

Business/Professional Writing

Business/Professional Writing

Business/Professional writing includes any writing that commonly occurs in the workplace or that serves a professional purpose either for the business or the writer. Some common purposes include requesting or providing information, incident reports, applying for a position or promotion, evaluating products or services, creating a professional image, evaluating employee performance, promoting products, explaining how to build or do something, and so on.

Business/Professional writing demands a high level of clarity, conciseness, and awareness of audience. A business audience, for instance, is apt to be less forgiving of spelling and punctuation errors than a parent or peer might be.

Key features of business/professional writing include

- attention to standard format (memo, business letter, resume)
- precision and brevity
- graphics/images/phrases to make content clear and memorable
- meticulous revision and editing

Some common examples of business/professional writing include memos, e-mails, brochures, reports, instructions, business letters, cover letters, resumes, advertisements, forms, and product/service endorsements. Additional examples are available from students already in the workforce and employers.

Appendix J
Reading Log

The Reading Log

What is it?

A place for students to react to their reading. Teachers may offer prompts or suggestions or simply allow students some time to write what they wish. Typically, this type of writing remains unpolished and ungraded.

Some Suggestions for Prompts (General)

- What are your first impressions? How have your views changed (about the book or a character)? Would you recommend this book?
- What emotions did today's reading make you feel?
- Are there connections between the book (or a character) and your own life? Do you respect or loathe one of the characters?
- What questions are you left with as a result of today's reading? What confuses you?
- What changes would you recommend to the author? What questions would you ask her or him?

Some More Suggestions for Prompts (Specific)

- Find examples of particularly effective word choice in today's reading (verbs, adjectives).
- Find an example of an effective short sentence, apposition, realistic dialogue, effective description of setting, and so on.
- Select a short passage from today's reading (less than 100 words) and write a precis, paraphrase, or summary or it.

Suggestions for Assessment

- Teachers may treat the reading log as a checklist item (either completed or not), checking at regular intervals and providing clear instructions what "completed" means (in terms of length or substance).
- Teachers may collect the logs but evaluate only some entries.

Note

Teachers may choose to call this a Learning Log and to encourage students to use it as a place to reflect on both their reading and their writing.

Appendix K

Purpose and Audience

Purpose and Audience

Purposes for Writing/Representing

Audiences

advertise analyse announce argue challenge comment compare congratulate contrast defend describe dramatize entertain evaluate evoke explain express attitude/emotion express opinion hypothesize inform instruct narrate negotiate persuade plan present research question reach a conclusion record regulate speculate suggest summarize warn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trusted friend(s); same/opposite sex • peer: younger/older student(s), writing buddy • imaginary reader: other time, other place, yourself, older self • character(s) in fiction, films, TV dramas, commercials • self as expert to less well-informed reader(s) • unknown peer: epals • parent(s)/caregiver(s), grandparent(s), relative(s) • trusted adult: teacher(s) (past-present), parent/caregiver of a friend, leader of club/association to which student belongs • advice columnist • school personnel • known adult(s), supportive readers/listeners/viewers • assembly of students • media personality or other celebrity: talk show host, pop star, sports star author, producer • community groups: seniors, special interest groups • media: TV, newspapers, publishers, companies, businesses, agencies, adjudicators of a writing contest • markers in assessment context • adults in authority: principal, members of school advisory council, MLA, MP • unknown public readership—past, present, future, — extraterrestrial • bulletin board: school, community, electronic • hostile readership • high status adults, e.g., Premier, Prime Minister, Lieutenant-Governor, Governor General, etc.
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(adapted from *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: High School*, 1998)

Appendix L

Writing Conferences

Writing Conferences

Conferencing is an integral and ongoing component of assessment in Writing 421A. Like writing itself, the writing conference is an active and dynamic process. A writing conference should be regarded as a conversation between the writer and the teacher rather than as an editing session during which the teacher ‘fixes’ things within the student’s writing. Each conference should be brief (5-7 minutes), unique and individualized, based on the needs of the student.

“Confidence is a writer’s central need.” (Ferguson McKay, 1987) It is essential to begin each conference by acknowledging something positive about the writing. Teachers should also try to focus on only one or two issues at a time to avoid overwhelming the student with too much information. It is important for the writing teacher to listen to the student’s thoughts on the draft in question. By listening to what the student considers valuable within the writing, the writing teacher is better able to help the student to remain truthful and focused within his/her writing.

The purpose of the initial writing conference is to deal with content, meaning, and focus. In order to guide the writing student to this end, teachers can ask such questions as “What is the most important thing you would like to say in this piece of writing?” “What surprised you about this draft?” “Where do you hear your voice coming through?” “Which areas of the draft are not smooth?” “What is your next step?” These questions force the student to reflect upon the writing and to take ownership of it. It also helps to focus on the ‘big picture’ of their writing piece. Subsequent conferences will then deal with such issues as style, organization, punctuation, and spelling.

The goal of the writing conference is to teach writing students to question themselves, to challenge themselves, to recognize strengths and weaknesses within their writing, and to make choices that will enhance their writing. Through these conferences, it is intended that students will become more self-reliant and more confident within the craft of writing.

(adapted from Nancie Atwell)

Appendix M
Conference Record

Conference Record

Conference Record**Student Name**

Date	Selection	Focus	Goal/Comment	Conferenced by

(adapted from *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: High School*, 1998)

Appendix N
Peer Conferencing

Peer Conferencing

What is it?

An opportunity for students to read and respond to their classmate's writing at all stages of the writing process.

What should I do to make peer conferencing effective?

- Make it an established routine in class.
- Give explicit instructions.
- Model conferencing situations (using current students, former students, or a willing staff member).
Hold students accountable for their performance as writers and reviewers.

Setting the Stage

- Have a clear purpose (idea generation? “new eyes” to briefly review an early or partial draft? detailed review of a complete draft? proofreading for conventions?)
- Decide how to structure the activity (group size and makeup? room arrangement? oral, written, electronic feedback? amount of time provided?)
- Determine how to establish accountability (credit for sharing and reviewing? will teachers review and assess the feedback? how will groups be monitored?)

Key Suggestions

- Avoid simply putting students into groups and asking them to respond to each other's writing without preparing them for the experience.
- Initially, give students opportunities to practice collaboration safely
 - through non-writing activities (a sudoku puzzle, for instance)
 - through discussion of other people's writing, not their own (to practise using a guidesheet, perhaps)
 - through prewriting activities (idea generation), which are intrinsically supportive rather than critical

Teaching Students to Give Effective Feedback (Beyond “Good work” or “This stinks”)

- Model the process (review a paper on an overhead transparency).
- Use rubrics, guiding questions, or checklists.
- Discuss the features of effective writing specifically.
- Establish a formula for feedback (for example, ask students to provide two positive comments, one question, and one place where they would like to see additional detail).
- Ask peer readers to tell the writer what they think the writing says.
- Provide ways to make the feedback visual and concrete (for example, depending on the purpose for the conferencing, use separate coloured highlighters for opinions and facts, or for ideas and supporting detail, or for vivid verbs and transitions). No highlighters available? Use straight lines, wavy lines, parentheses, brackets...

Notes

Peer collaboration provides a real audience for student writing. Most students are apt to enjoy and benefit from it. Persevere past any initial frustrations.

Appendix O

Sentence Combining

Sentence Combining

What is it?

Sentence combining involves teaching students how to join two or more simple sentences into longer, more sophisticated (yet grammatically correct) sentences.

It is a simple, engaging activity to make students aware of a writer's choices involving sentence construction, punctuation, syntax, and much more.

A Few Examples

- 1.1 I like biking.
- 1.2 I like to swim.
- 1.3 I like reading.

Combined:

- I like to read, bike, and swim.
- I like swimming, reading, and biking.

- 2.1 Charlottetown is our capital city.
- 2.2 Charlottetown is beautiful in the spring.

Combined:

- Charlottetown, our capital city, is beautiful in the spring.
- Our capital city, Charlottetown, is beautiful in the spring.

- 3.1 Andrew forgot to set his alarm.
- 3.2 Andrew was late for the exam.
- 3.3 The alarm was at his bedside.

Combined:

- Andrew forgot to set his bedside alarm, so he was late for the exam.
- Because he forgot to set his bedside alarm, Andrew was late for the exam.
- Andrew forgot to set his bedside alarm and was late for the exam.

Suggestions

Teachers may

- discuss examples of combined sentences from their own independent reading or ask students to identify combined sentences from students' independent reading
- de-combine a complex sentence from a novel into a series of simple sentences and challenge students (in groups, perhaps) to recreate the original sentence exactly as the author wrote it
- ask students to look for examples of combined sentences – or for opportunities to combine sentences – in their own or their peers' writing

Appendix P

Mentor Text

Mentor Text

What is it?

A way for students to learn principles of grammar and mechanics by first analysing and then imitating short pieces of effective writing (mentor text).

An effective and engaging alternative to worksheets.

How do I use it?

1. Find a sentence that vividly demonstrates a concept, sentence structure, or punctuation you would like to see in your students' writing (specific detail, complex sentences, serial commas...whatever).
2. Display the sentence and ask, "What do you notice? What do you like about this sentence?" Allow the students time to think about its effect, imagine the author's intent, or consider alternatives to the structure and to share their observations. Keep the discussion under five minutes.
3. Ask students to write their own sentence, imitating the structure or style of the mentor sentence but using original content.
4. Allow time for voluntary sharing. Initially, have students share their sentences with a partner or in a small group. Conclude by asking for two or three volunteers to share their sentences with the class.
5. Later, as you find specific structures imitated in student assignments, celebrate and display them.

Some Examples of Mentor Sentences

1. "Her voice was rough, like a bus grinding its brakes" (Tracy Mack, Birdland).
2. "Cujo stood at the edge of the lawn, his great head lowered, his eyes reddish and filmy, growling" (Stephen King, Cujo).
3. "His room smelled of cooked grease, Lysol, and age" (Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings).

Suggestion

Share, discuss, and have students imitate mentor text often. Any text that strikes you as powerful writing will work.

Appendix Q
Writing Portfolio

Writing Portfolio

What is it?

A collection of student work, purposefully selected.

Three types of portfolio and their purposes

- 1) Growth portfolios
 - to show growth or change over time; to help develop process skills such as self-evaluation and goal-setting; to identify strengths and weaknesses; to track the development of specific writing skills
- 2) Showcase portfolios
 - to showcase end-of-semester accomplishments; to compile a sample of best work; to illustrate student perceptions of favourite or most important work; to communicate a student's writing skills to others (employers, parents, future teachers)
- 3) Evaluation portfolios
 - to document achievement for grading purpose; to serve as performance indicators

Audience

The selection of audience will help shape the portfolio's construction. The student and teacher form the audience, of course, and both should consider and clearly state what they wish the portfolio to accomplish. Other possible audiences include classmates, friends, employers, parents, and other teachers. An awareness of audience will inform decisions around language and content, and whether, in addition to a title page and table of contents, a cover letter is necessary to provide a context for the selections inside.

Content

Teachers may choose the number and variety of portfolio pieces they believe manageable.

A portfolio may consist of as few as three or four samples, accompanied by reflections, or it may be elaborate, consisting of several pieces and including drafts, assignments, tests, homework, and other types of media (artwork, posters, music, digitized audio and video on cd-rom or e-portfolio formats).

Here are some suggestions for what might appear in a Writing 421A portfolio:

- early and later pieces of work
- rough drafts and final drafts
- samples of best or favourite work
- cover letter and/or table of contents to introduce the portfolio
- samples of work from each genre/topic/unit covered
- rubrics/criteria used to grade work

Writing Portfolio

- artwork or other media to augment the writing and personalize the portfolio
- feedback/reflections by teacher or peers or parents
- self-reflection on
 - beginning of semester strengths, weaknesses, and goals
 - improvement
 - strengths and weaknesses of specific works
 - process: pre-writing, drafts, revisions, editing
 - favourite/best/most important/most challenging pieces
 - overall strengths and weaknesses/progress/achievement of semester goals

Reflections

Student reflections are a key component of the portfolio and crucial to student improvement. In reflections students are typically asked to

- comment on why specific samples were selected or
- comment on what they liked and did not like about the samples or
- comment on or identify the processes involved in developing specific pieces or
- point to examples of how specific skills or knowledge improved or
- identify strengths and weaknesses in samples of work or
- identify strategies used for improvement or
- assess their own past or current ability in a test or
- some combination of the above

Reflection should be ongoing through the semester. Students will improve with practice and feedback.

Reflection may be in paragraph form or as responses to questions on a sheet to be attached to the sample of work it addresses. Some examples of typical reflection prompts are

- Why did you select this piece to include in your portfolio?
- This is my favourite piece because...
- What are the strengths of this piece? Weaknesses?
- How does this piece compare to another piece in the portfolio? How is it better or worse? Where can you see progress or improvement?
- How did you get “stuck” working on this task? How did you get “unstuck”?
- One skill I could not perform very well but now I can is...
- What I learned from writing this piece is...
- What do you like or not like about this piece?

Writing Portfolio

- If you were a teacher and grading your work, what grade would you give it? Using the appropriate rubric, score yourself and justify the score with specific traits from the rubric and specific examples from your work.
- How much time/effort did you spend on this piece?
- What does the portfolio as a whole reveal about you as a writer?
- A feature of this portfolio I particularly like is...
- In this portfolio I see evidence of...

Evaluation

Portfolio evaluation will vary from teacher to teacher depending on the type and purpose of the portfolio teachers choose to assign.

Some options for what to grade:

1. Nothing, or almost nothing. If the portfolio's contents consist of pieces that have already been graded, the portfolio may be evaluated simply on whether or not it was completed or on the degree to which it contains required course work.
2. The metacognitive, process, or organizational elements. Depending on its purpose, the portfolio may contain a variety of student reflections on goals, strengths and weaknesses, process, and growth. Samples of drafts or samples of earlier and later work may provide evidence of process skills or progress which can be evaluated and graded.
3. Everything. Teachers may choose to evaluate the entire package: the selected samples as well as the reflections, organization, and presentation of the portfolio.

Portfolios are most often graded with a rubric. A rubric that clearly states the criteria for which the various portfolio components will be graded can help students grasp the priorities of the course.

Suggestions for Teachers

- If you are new to portfolios, start small. Perhaps ask students to select three or four pieces (best, most challenging, most rewarding) and provide reflections on them. Discuss the criteria for selections early in the semester.
- Reflections are best completed immediately and attached to the samples. Additional reflections may be completed by the end of the semester, by which time student views may comment on how their views have changed.
- Encourage students to select and decorate their own portfolio folders or to personalize e-portfolios with photos or music.

Writing Portfolio

- Discuss portfolio audience with students. Ideally, real audiences such as peers and parents should have an opportunity to read portfolio pieces, and perhaps even to become “portfolio partners” who provide written feedback or suggestions on which pieces would make good portfolio pieces. If students wish to keep some pieces private or share them with the teacher only, they should be allowed to so.
- Explain the purpose of the portfolio to students as an opportunity to recognize their skills and growth as writers, to record their ideas and reflections during their grade 10 year, to tell their unique story.

Appendix R

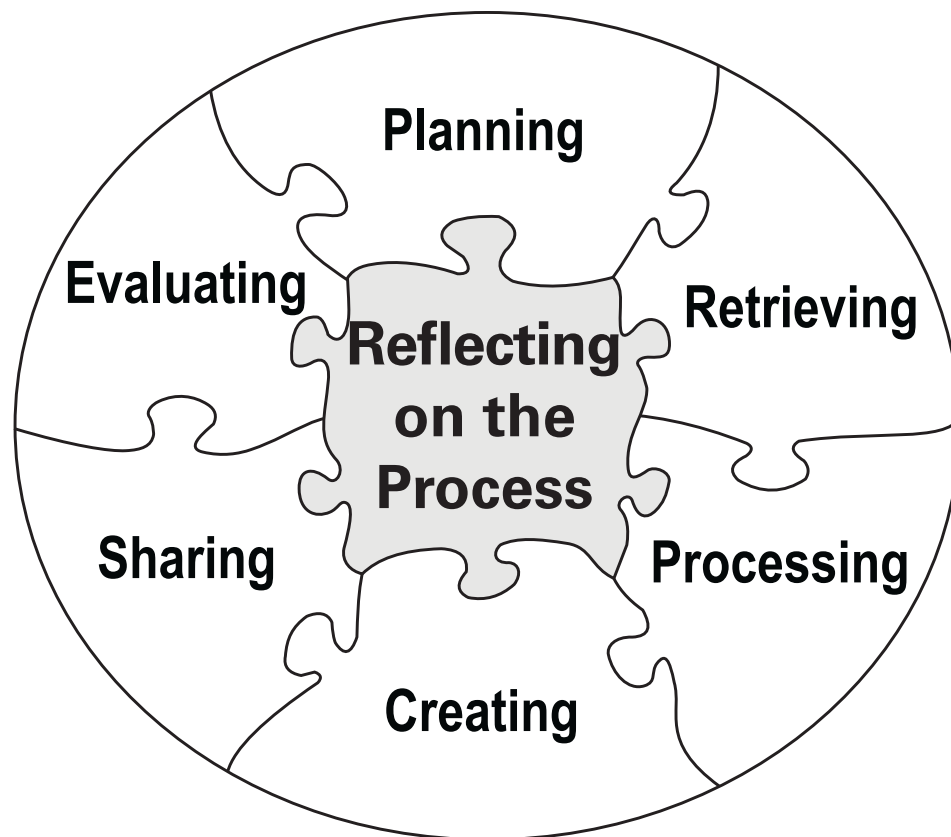
**Student Guide to the
Inquiry Process**

STUDENT GUIDE

to the INQUIRY PROCESS

Writing 421A

Guided Practice
and
Project Planning



Selecting a Topic and Planning an Inquiry

Guided Practice

How do I select a topic and plan my inquiry?

Brainstorm ideas and ask questions that interest you. For example, if you want to know more about “child soldiers,” then you need to come up with a number of questions that interest you. This will help you narrow the focus to something that can be researched. Remember—you are trying to answer a question that has not been asked before—not just looking for someone else’s answers. As you search for sources that relate to your question, you could find that your inquiry question changes or needs to be refined more.

TIPS: Web Searches

GOOGLE is a search engine, not a website or a source that can be cited in your research. It is a good starting place to get ideas, but do not rely totally on this for your research.

Wikipedia may be tempting to use too but is not always reliable as a source, and it should be viewed only as a starting point—a place to find ideas and additional sources at the end of each article.

Guided Practice:

Enter “child soldiers” into an online search engine. Notice how many possible links there are for this topic—obviously, we need to narrow the topic!

Broad Topic:	child soldiers
Narrower Topics:	recruitment of child soldiers, gender-related experiences, organizations and efforts to reintegrate children into society, international laws related to child soldiers
Possible Question:	How do former child soldiers move back into society?
Possible Sources:	Websites, encyclopedias, journals, and other sources that can provide reliable information. Use a variety of formats.
Audience:	Class/teacher/community/other
Format of Presentation:	research paper, oral presentation
Evaluation Criteria:	Teacher and/or student-generated criteria to evaluate product AND process (includes “learning to learn skills”)

Project Planner

Selecting a Topic and Planning an Inquiry

What is my broad area of inquiry?

Narrowing the focus...

Some possible inquiry questions...

<p>Where can I find reliable information sources?</p>

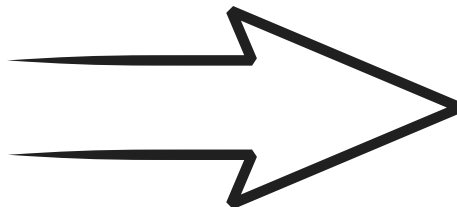
<p>Who will be the audience and what format will I make my presentation?</p>
--

<p>How will I be evaluated on this inquiry project?</p>

What is my plan and schedule? Include checkpoints.

Start date

Completion date



Retrieving Information

Guided Practice

How do I go about retrieving information for my inquiry?

Searching for information can be a tough job for even the most experienced researcher. Stay organized and keep a record of your searches. You will likely need to find these sites again. Start by planning out your search. You might assume that the World Wide Web is the best place to begin but there are lots of other options too. Online searches can be time-consuming and frustrating. Try out encyclopedias, texts, videos, periodicals (magazines), and databases such as EBSCO; they are right within reach at school, home, or your local library. There are often community sources as well such as government records or materials produced by community organizations. Don't forget to ask for help!

TIPS: Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources are first-hand materials such as a novel written by an author, letter, diary or journal entry, autobiography, speech, personal interview, first-hand account of an event, photograph, painting, or other original work. **Secondary** sources include all second-hand accounts of primary sources or materials that have been interpreted by others—movie and book reviews, text books, translations, encyclopedia articles, historical accounts (written by someone who was not there at the time of the event), or recreated artifacts or replicas. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if a source is primary or secondary (and, may in fact be a bit of both). In the case of web searches, articles on a specific topic with a stated author are generally primary sources, but these would be considered secondary if the article interprets work that has already been published.

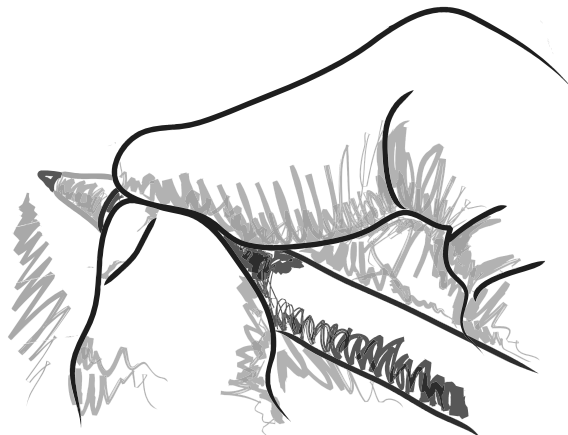
Guided Practice:

1. Make a checklist of all the possible places where you might find information.
2. Keep detailed records of the sources you find that you intend to use. If a source is not a good match, discard the record to avoid confusion.
3. Look closely at the URL addresses of any websites that you may use – URLs hold clues to reliable sites or ones that may be biased. Enter “child soldiers” into a search engine such as GOOGLE and note the domain tag on the URLS (this is the 3-letter clue to the origin). For example, “edu” refers to an educational organization or institution; “org” refers to a (usually) non-profit or governmental organization; “gov” refers to _____; and “com” means the site is _____.
4. Scroll through the first 20-30 hits for “child soldiers” and see how many fit the four categories above: edu ____; gov ____; org ____; com ____

Project Planner

Retrieving Information

Title Whether it is a Web source or a hard-copy source, be precise about the title, its origins, or other relevant information that you may need later.	Author Is this the word of an expert author or simply someone's personal view? Is there any information on the author at the end of the article or in other Web sites?	Audience Who is the intended audience of the article? For example, is it written for educational purposes or is it intended to tell a story or entertain a general audience?	Current Is the information current or dated? When was it last updated, or how long has it existed? This may be applicable in the case of historical research.	Citation Is there a recommended way of citing material from the site?
Source #1				
Source #2				
Source #3				
Source #4				
Source #5				



Evaluating Sources

Guided Practice

How do I know if a source is a good one?

While you may think that you'll never find enough material to complete your research project, more often the complete opposite is the case. Finding sources is one thing — finding **good** sources is a whole other thing. Just as important as knowing a bit about the author and the intended audience of the information is being certain that the information is relevant to your work.

TIPS: Citing Sources

Avoiding plagiarism can be tricky when you are selecting information. If you are using data, findings, arguments, or any other work of others, you must give credit to that source. For example, if you are using statistics about the number of child soldiers worldwide, or research results about the psychological impact of war on children, you must cite the source. Common knowledge need not be cited as it is generally shared by all readers (e.g., recruiting child soldiers is a violation of their human rights). If you are not sure, check with a teacher or librarian, or refer to a writing handbook for more guideline

Guided Practice:

1. Ask yourself if the material is closely related to your inquiry. For example, if your topic is about how child soldiers are rescued and move back into society, you need not include information about the climate of their country, or the national sport.
2. Use the same guidelines for measuring reliability of the author as you as you would for selecting sources. Nationally-known organizations, educational institutions, or expert authors are the most reliable sources.
3. Is the information up-to-date, or, is there historical data that may be useful? Older materials may prove to be valuable but check to be sure that the data is still current and has not been replaced by newer information.
4. Is the material easy to access when you need it? Remember to record it!
5. Is there an obvious bias or does the article present a balanced view?
6. Is there enough material to help out your inquiry? Or, is there so much that you need to be selective in matching it to your work? Select three sources of information on child soldiers and try to answer the guiding questions above to get a sense for how relevant or valuable the material is to you.

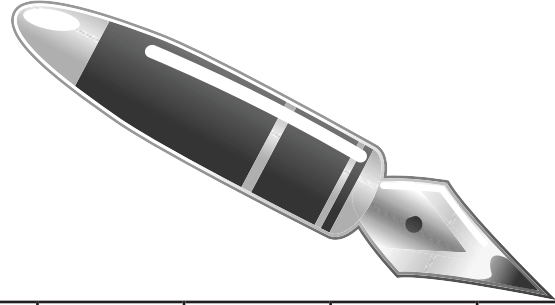
Project Planner

Evaluating Sources

My topic:

Inquiry question:

Source	Relevance Score 1-3	Reliability evidence	Timelines/ current/ dated	Availability easy to find	Bias 1-3	Quantify



Processing

Guided Practice

Now what? How do I pull it all together?

By now, you've gathered a number of sources of information for your inquiry. You've done some weeding, sorted through materials, and already learned quite a bit. Now, it's time to finalize your focus and select the most relevant information. You may find that you've shifted your focus a bit as you came across new information and changed paths. That's all part of the inquiry process and shows that you are constantly evaluating and re-evaluating information. At this point, you may discover that you either need to narrow your focus or broaden it somewhat to capture what it is you want to find out about this topic.

TIPS: Note-taking and Summarizing

Being able to take good (not necessarily lengthy) notes and summarizing information is a skill that will benefit you for a lifetime—but it takes practice and patience. Some people like to use a note-card system or other means that works for their particular styles. The main thing is that you stay organized and efficient.

Do...

- record the source, author, and page somewhere obvious.
- copy quotations exactly as they appear in the original.
- summarize ideas in your own words—see below.

Summarizing vs Paraphrasing

- Both mean restating original work into your own words.
- Summarizing reduces the original ideas by at least 50% whereas paraphrasing will be about the same length as the original.
- Concept maps are a form of note-taking and can be very detailed.

Guided Practice:

1. Select an appropriate source of information on a topic such as child soldiers or a variation of this topic and summarize a principal paragraph or section. Ask your teacher for assistance on this strategy if you aren't sure.
2. Try to reduce the original paragraph or section by half using your own words and the key ideas of the section.
3. Share with a partner to evaluate how well you did in summarizing.

Project Planner

Processing

Reintegration of child soldiers

Dr. Samantha Nutt

War Child Canada

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/archives/article670332.ece>

- 300,000 child soldiers worldwide
- children easily led into military
- girls are especially vulnerable
- many are rejected by families and communities or orphaned
- need for education and jobs

Planning for My Learning Style

My biggest challenge with taking notes for this inquiry project will be ...

I can overcome this by ...

Explain your preferred method of note-taking or draw a sketch of the “system” that works for you ...

Creating

Guided Practice Sheet

How do I go from data collection to product creation?

Now things really start to get interesting! You are now ready to transform all the factual data that you have collected into a product of your own creation. Chances are you have already decided on (or, have been given) a particular format for your product. This is where the planning part helps a lot. Think about what sections of your research will fit best into the introduction, the main body, and the conclusion. Physically move your written notes around, or use sticky notes to help organize your thoughts. Seeing the information fit together visually often helps. Look for any gaps or areas that may need a bit more attention.

TIPS: Graphic Organizers and End Products

Graphic organizers are a good way to sort and organize information that will form your final product. There are numerous versions of graphic organizers and it's simply a matter of deciding which one will do the best job for you. For example, if you plan to create a digital sideshow as your end product, you might use a storyboard to figure out the sequence of slides and info on each slide. If you are doing a visual display such as a photoessay, you might choose to practise with a concept map. An oral presentation or newscast simulation may work better using a sequence chart to plan the script or interview.

Other ideas for end products include the following:

- Brochure, Pamphlet, Poster, Chart
- Report, Research Paper, Essay, Editorial, Letter
- Panel Discussion, Debate, Speech, Oral Presentation, Song/Lyric
- Drama, Movie Script, Video, Digital Presentation, Web Page, Audio
- Map, Painting, Scrapbook, Collage, Exhibition

Project Planner

Creating

Checklist: Getting from the Data Collection Stage to End Product.

- I have gathered enough information (data) and kept records of my sources.
- I have analysed my data to ensure that it is connected closely to my inquiry.
- I have used graphic organizers or some other system, to help sort my data and to analyse the results.
- I have organized my data into 1) introduction, 2) main body, and 3) conclusion.
- I know what I want to present as an end product and how to get there.

Select one or more effective graphic organizers for your inquiry project and show in the space below how you would use them.

An illustration of a stack of four books of varying thicknesses, with a pen lying horizontally in front of them on a surface. The drawing is in a simple, sketchy line-art style.

Sharing

Guided Practice

How do I share my work?

Usually “sharing” work means an oral presentation of some sort—something that many people are uneasy about doing. When it comes to sharing your research work with others, there are a few things that you can keep in mind that will help you to look focused and interesting. It is not important to include every single written thought that you have put into your project—it is more effective and interesting to your audience if you summarize your findings and present the most important ideas or conclusions that you have discovered during your inquiry. Body language is another important component of presenting. Try to keep eye contact with your audience as much as possible and don’t get fixated on one person or one side of the room. Speak clearly and make sure you are not chewing gum.

TIPS: Rubrics

Rubrics are tools that help both students and teachers when it comes to big projects or small tasks. These are usually grids with 3-5 columns with descriptions of criteria which are used to evaluate a task or a product. Obviously, it is most helpful to the presenter if he or she knows in advance which criteria (ideas) will be used to evaluate the work and presentation. Students and teachers can create a rubric together at the beginning of a project, or use a pre-existing one and adapt the criteria to fit. Rubrics do not have to be complicated and can be designed to suit every circumstance, whether it is to evaluate part of the inquiry process such as a group task, or an end product, such as a presentation or exhibit.

Guided Practice

Your job is to evaluate (mark) a photo essay Island architecture. With a partner or within in a small group, create an evaluation rubric that will measure the most important features of the photo essay (message, clarity, visual appeal, accuracy of information, variety of sources). Use the following template to get started.

Photo Essay	Limited	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
References	provides fewer than 3 sources of relevant information, few or no citations	provides 4-6 sources of relevant information, limited in variety, most citations accurate	provides 7-10 sources of relevant information, varied, citations accurate	provides more than 10 relevant and varied sources, all citations accurate
Visual Appeal				
Content or Message				

Project Planner

Sharing

Use the following template (pattern) to create a one-of-a-kind rubric for the end product that you have chosen to present your inquiry findings and conclusions. Try to be specific about what should be considered a “feature,” such as visual appeal (the sorts of things that make a product attractive to viewers—colour, neatness, size of lettering). Add more rows if necessary or make changes to headings if you wish.

Product to be Evaluated	Limited	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
#1 Feature of product (e.g., clarity of message to viewers)				
#2 Feature of product				
#3 Feature of product				



Guided Practice

Evaluating and Reflecting

How do I evaluate and reflect on the “Inquiry Process”?

You have reached the finish line of your inquiry ... or have you? Not really, and that is because an inquiry process is cyclical (a circle) rather than linear. It is all about thinking and then rethinking about the new information you have uncovered, putting it together with what you already know, and reaching new levels. Although you have learned a lot by the time you reach this stage, you probably raised some new questions too. Ask yourself about what you have learned, what more you would like to learn, and how you might proceed differently the next time. A good inquiry should lead to more inquiry.

TIPS: Self-Assessment

At this stage it is also important to think about **how** you learned as well as **what** you learned. If you worked independently, were you able to stay on task and meet the checkpoint deadlines? What were your strengths and weaknesses, and how can you work on improving some of these things? If you worked in a group, what did you learn about your work style in that situation, or the types of tasks that you like or dislike doing? How could you be more effective in the group? A project log is a good way to keep track of ideas and progress during a project and it allows you to reflect back on how far you came from the launch of the project.

Guided Practice

You have just completed a group project that involved research and a presentation about Island architecture. Now it is time to think about how you contributed to the overall project. Fill in the following according to how you think you would in a real-life situation (based upon your class or previous experience).

I contributed to the group project in the following ways....

In this group, I found it hard to...

I can change this by....

I could do the following to make the group more effective....

Project Planner

Evaluating and Reflecting

End-of-Project Self-Assessment

Inquiry project topic:	During the project I completed a number of tasks including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
As a result, I learned the following...	
Subject matter (Name the three most important things that you learned.)	
Working in a group (If applicable—state the challenges and bonuses.)	
Following the inquiry process	
Presenting to an audience (sharing)	
Next time I would... (What would you do differently next time, or what new questions have arisen from your inquiry?)	

SAMPLE RUBRIC for ASSESSMENT of INQUIRY PRODUCT

Assessment criteria for final product (bottom of grid) may be refined to reflect specific project formats (e.g., multimedia presentation, formal research paper, dramatization, visual presentation).

Inquiry Process Criteria		Exemplary	Proficient	Approaching Proficiency	Developing
Planning	Choosing topic, developing thesis, hypothesis, or driving question, and inquiry plan including presentation format and evaluation criteria	Independently explores a variety of topics and foci before deciding on a final selection. Develops a creative, original inquiry question or thesis statement. Inquiry plan is clear and detailed.	Demonstrates independence and critical thinking in selecting topic and narrowing focus. Completes inquiry plan including decisions around format and evaluation.	Requires minimal assistance in selection of topic and in focusing inquiry question. Completes plan and with assistance and is able to independently make most decisions regarding format and evaluation.	Requires significant guidance to select topic and to develop inquiry focus. Needs assistance to lay out plan and make decisions regarding format and evaluation criteria.
Retrieving	Locating and gathering sources, selecting relevant information, and evaluating for bias, validity and reliability	Independently locates a wide variety of sources, evaluates efficiently, and selects most relevant sources out of wide variety for use.	Locates a variety of sources on own. Minimal assistance required to evaluate source material. Uses most pertinent sources for inquiry.	Requires some assistance in locating sources. Variety of sources may be limited. Needs some assistance in evaluating source materials.	Requires significant assistance to locate sources. Selects only one type of source. Difficulty in evaluating source material.
Processing	Establishing a focus for inquiry, recording pertinent information, making connections and inferences, revising plan if necessary	Works independently and demonstrates analytical and high level critical thinking skills. Easily shifts direction if necessary and revises plan accordingly.	Demonstrates an average level of independence and critical thinking when analyzing information. Capable of revising inquiry plan if necessary.	Requires some guidance in recording, analyzing information and making connections. Hesitant to revise plan or unsure how to revise plan when obstacles occur.	Requires significant assistance in recording information, making connections, and in making inferences. Not sure how or when to edit or revise.
Creating	Organizing information, creating final product, editing and revising	Demonstrates high level of ability in organizing material and creating an innovative final product.	Demonstrates organizational ability and originality in clearly understood format and product. Edits and revises.	Requires moderate assistance in organizing new information into logical, engaging product. Some editing and revising evident.	Requires significant assistance to organize information into new product. Edits and revisions are guided.
Sharing	Presenting new understandings, communicating with audience, demonstrating appropriate behaviour	Easily communicates new understandings using appropriate language and actions. Content knowledge is highly evident.	Demonstrates maturity, clarity of message, and content knowledge in sharing new understandings.	Mostly capable of communicating new understandings in a mature and focused manner. Practices appropriate behaviour.	Experiences difficulty in communicating new understandings or content knowledge. May not demonstrate appropriate actions.
Evaluating	Reflecting on process and product to gain new understanding of learning, transfer of new skills to other situations	Demonstrates high level of understanding of the metacognitive process and how learning transfers.	Uses reflection to critically evaluate learning process and understands how this will transfer to new situations.	Mostly uses reflection to understand how learning transpired and can see how these skills may be transferable to new situations.	Experiences difficulty in making connections between past learning and how this may apply or transfer to new situations.
Final product	Engaging topic, clear focus, original research or perspective-taking, innovative format, or efficient use of medium, meets goal of inquiry project	Product stands out as superior demonstrating high level of originality, creativity and critical thinking. Selected medium is innovative and engaging to audience.	Product reflects meaningful inquiry process. Evidence of new understandings is clear and focused. Use of medium is appropriate to communicating learning.	Product mostly reflects meaningful inquiry process and formation of new ideas. May need more creativity and originality in selection of medium and construction of product.	Product does not reflect meaningful inquiry process, or it is difficult to comprehend. Minimal evidence of creative or original thought in content or medium selection.

Appendix S

Evaluating Sources

Evaluating Sources

Sample Guiding Questions

- 1) What is the address or URL? Check for the domain tag: “edu” indicates an educational institution; “org” indicates a non-profit or nongovernmental organization; “gov” refers to a government site; while “com” indicates a private corporation.
- 2) Who is the author? Is the source reliable, or does it simply express a personal view? Generally, if the site is affiliated with an organization, it is considered to be acceptable.
- 3) Who is the audience? Is the site intended for educational purposes, or is it a commercial site intent on selling a product?
- 4) Is the site current, and how long has it been in existence?
- 5) Is there a recommended way of citing material from the site? Be sure to give full credit for the information accessed.

There are many other questions that may guide students in their inquiry. Check with other sources or the school teacher-librarian for more help in locating credible sources.

Appendix T

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Note making

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Note making

“Summarizing” means restating main ideas of a source in your own words.

- written in own words
- includes only main points
- uses fewer words than source
- need not follow organization of source
- is objective, does not include own interpretations

“Paraphrasing” is restating information from a source in your own words.

- written in own words
- more detailed than a summary
- has same number of words as source (approx.)
- keeps the same organization as source
- is objective, does not include own interpretations

Linear Notes

- notes aligned point by point under one another (e.g., shopping list)
- quick and easy
- well-suited to real-time when information appears in a sequence (e.g., lecture)
- can get wordy, long
- may not connect to key points as clearly as other methods
- works best if a note-making framework is used

Non-linear or Pattern Notes

- strong visual info
- often topic is in centre of page and notes branch out (e.g., mind-map style)
- easy to connect concepts
- provides immediate overview
- can look “messy”
- may run out of space
- may be more difficult to transfer to linear writing task

