

More Writing, Less Work Wrap-Up

I have been doing this session for many years, and when I did it differently in Norman, I really kind of threw myself off. I spent more time than I would have on some things, and not enough time on others. I'm sorry for that, but I did take some notes right after the session so I could try to make some things more clear. Please read on.

- **More writing** is important. Students have to practice in order to improve, and they need feedback from their teacher, but you do NOT have to provide feedback on every piece that you assign.
- **Less work** means that you find ways that they can practice without your needing to take home a stack of papers. Give them feedback on some but not all of what they do. If you spend time getting to know the scoring guide, then you can ensure that your minimal feedback is more meaningful. Give them just enough feedback without overworking yourself. (You know that they are not reading the comments you write so carefully in the margins, right?)
- **TIPS:**
 - **Grade fewer** of the pieces that they write. There are many different ways to arrange this, and you'll have to find the one that works for your teaching style.
 - Have them do 3 and turn in 1. Students choose best 1.
 - Have them keep a writing journal with short, assigned responses. Split each class into five or six groups, and take up only one group each time. That could cut your workload by 75-80%, depending on how you arrange the groups. Just keep track of which group you graded when and keep it even.
 - Take up three assignments. Grade one and give participation points for the other two.
 - **Grade holistically.** (See note on next page.)
 - **Score sample papers in groups** and spend some time letting them talk about what paper gets what score. Let them argue with each other. Guide them to the "right" way of thinking about the scores. Through this work, they will begin to see what good writing looks like.
 - **Write and revise together on the overhead projector.**
 - **Use this pattern: Claim, Evidence, Commentary.**
 - **Level 3 questions turn into beautifully crafted writing prompts.**

- **Holistic Scoring:**

- Page 10 has a list of tips that help me remember what I need to keep in mind as I'm scoring holistically.
- Pages 11 and 12 have sample scoring guides that you might like to use. It doesn't matter what guide you use as long as you pick one and use it all year. Also, you need to spend some time getting your students acquainted with the scoring guide. Page 12 is the one that I used most often.
- Pages 13-15 are sample papers with their prompts. The papers are all written by students.
- Page 16 is one of my favorite prompts to use. It is followed by a set of sample papers written by students in response to that prompt. Each of the six scores on the SAT scoring guide are represented in that set of papers.
- Page 23 is a sample response paper that I would write for the whole class when many students seemed to be making the same kinds of mistakes.
- Page 24 is an illustration of how you can translate writing scores into grades. Grades are arbitrary, so you can assign them as you need to.
 - Early in the year for my students, a 1 is barely passing, but later in the year, a 1 is 52%. I tell students that the grading system will change and when it will change, and I tell them that their goal for themselves needs to be upward movement on the scale of writing scores.
 - The key here is that the qualities of good writing do not change. My scoring rubric does not change. The grades that I assign to different scores will change as the year progresses.
- Pages 25-29 are an article that I thought you would enjoy reading. If we had had time, I was going to show you a reading strategy that gets students thinking about and using writing skills...without making them do any writing.

- **Concrete Paragraph:**

- When all is said and done, I have to remind students that they are allowed to use abstract words in all other pieces of writing. They just have to remember to provide ample concrete description to back it up.
- For the rest of the year, a circled word is shorthand, our own edit mark, and it means, "You have an abstract word here that needs more concrete detail."