

Classroom Teaching Strategies Learned from the ESU 13 February 2014 In-Service

This is a compilation of strategies learned from attending the ESU 13 In-service. Each teacher was asked to share at least one strategy they gained from the sessions attended. Since knowledge is power, the strategies listed below are a way to share the knowledge SCS teachers gained by attending the in-service.

As you read through the strategies, do not hesitate to contact the teacher that described the strategy to get more details about the implementation of the strategy. It would also be very beneficial to all teachers if you shared with us how the strategy worked or not in the classroom.

Submitted by Cyd Coffee

Title: Vocabulary and Reading Complex Texts

The presentation by Elfrieda H. Hiebert about vocabulary and reading knowledge has a really good website with a variety of free materials. One of the tidbits she shared that I hadn't thought about was that students taking the mandated tests will read around an 800 word story before they get to the open ended question and students need to practice more silent reading to help their ability to do well on the tests.

The number one thing she wanted us to take away from her session was that words live in families and should be taught not as a single word.

If you are teaching a word such as cold then also teach frigidity, frigidness, refrigerator, refrigeration. The categories of unique words in narrative texts that we should use include: emotions & attitudes, communication, character traits, and social traits.

I am going to use FYI for Kids from the website. It is a collection of magazine articles whose objective is to demonstrate a type of text that is essential for increasing students' engagement in and proficiency with complex texts--short engaging articles that communicate critical information. I will put an article up on the projector. Students will silent read and then work on worksheets. The site provides the articles but the teacher has to design his or her own work to go with the article. Students are to read each article themselves even the struggling readers. I am going to try this after lunch recess three days a week starting in March. My goal is to have my students comfortable with reading difficult reads that take a little time and then feel confident in their ability to answer questions about what they have read.

She says students have to learn to take responsibility for the text. They have to expect challenge. 15 minutes a day is the minimum that students must read instructional text materials to themselves.

The website address: www.textproject.org

Submitted by Carrie Edmund

Title: Frayer Model Graphic Organizer

The Frayer Model is a graphic organizer activity to help students learn new vocabulary or concepts.

Students compare what it is and is not as well as characteristics of the new concept. They will complete the activity by developing a definition in their own words.

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.

Submitted by Barb Engebretsen

Title: Basic Signal Words Graphic Organizer

“All the Write Stuff: Strategies to Improve Your Students’ Writing in the CTE Classroom”

Presenters: Cory Epler and Tricia Parker-Siemers, NE Dept. of ED

<http://www.education.ne.gov/read> This is the Language Arts Education site. Select Workshops/Events to reach the ESU 13 Winter Conference for the full document.

The charts selected are used to help students summarize information: **Basic Signal Words – Chart & Graphic Organizer**. Students fill in the organizer after an activity. This aids in uniformity and completeness of their written report. Although CTE stands for Career & Technical Education, the importance of consistency across the curriculum was stressed. We want the application of core subjects to be relevant to all students, regardless of their future careers and academic training necessary.

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.

Submitted by Brad Hecht

Title: Author’s Chair & C.O.P.S.

The portion of my morning session that I found most useful was when the presenters talked about how they used the "Writers' Workshop." Of the four components they addressed, (mini lesson, independent writing time, conferencing, and sharing/author’s chair). I was particularly intrigued with how the presenter described her use of the "Author's Chair" in her classroom. It sounded just as fun as it was productive.

The main points of this component were to first:

"Focus on students sharing examples taken from the mini-lesson conducted earlier"

"Students do not necessarily share their whole piece e.g. If it's a good beginning, they share only the beginning"

"Try to use a special chair - the 'Author's Chair'"

"Allows students to learn from each other and to see/hear good examples of writing"

Although the use of the special chair seemed like a small detail at the time, it has had a very dramatic effect for my classroom in just the first few days. The students definitely covet this chair and are working harder to get into it than when we just shared from our desks. I guess it is similar to the use of the conch in "The Lord of the Flies". Either way, using a specific chair for this purpose works well.

Other things I have started using that are very simple yet effective are the use of the C.O.P.S acronym (capitalization, organization, punctuation and spelling) when students are doing their writing. The students get a kick out of it and the message really sticks.

I also liked the idea of focusing more on having the students write their own endings to the stories they read, and having them write sentences that use words that start with each letter in their names.

Submitted by Mary Munson

Title: Performance Writing (in all grades) and Extended Responses (in all grades)

The most important thing I learned in these sessions about teaching writing:

Teach English grammar with each writing lesson, no matter how old the students are. Review conjunctions, interjections, etc, even identifying nouns and verbs; simple, complex, compound sentences, should be reviewed every year, perhaps every semester.....even capitals and periods.

Initiate one good (extra) English, creative tool with each writing session, such as a simile, metaphor, hyperbole, etc. Add something to each lesson.

DO NOT TAKE ANY GRAMMAR THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAUGHT AT ANY PARTICULAR GRADE OR LEARNED AT ANY CERTAIN AGE FOR GRANTED. And of course always teach organization and creative introductions and conclusions.

Give examples and coaching and enthusiastic cheerleading.

Submitted by Laura Kling

Title: Mentor Texts

I will implement using "Mentor Texts" in my classroom. A mentor text is a published book whose big idea can easily inspire students to write about a similar idea or to write with the same technique used by the author. Students can be encouraged to write similar stories or write new endings for the stories. The presenters gave us lists of possible books to use for teaching: *personal narratives; beginning, middle, and end; point of view; sequencing; setting; character change; figurative language; power of illustrations; informational text; and opinion*. I really like how they used award winning literature to teach writing skills.

I will use literature in more of my writing lessons. I think this will be a great way to show students the kind of writing they can do. Some examples of books that I want to use in my classroom are The Cat in the Hat and Thunder Cake for *beginning, middle, and end*; Make Way for Ducklings and The Lorax for *settings*; and Owl Moon and Knots on a Counting Rope for *figurative language*. I have lists of books that can be used for each of the above types of writing. I can get copies for anyone that would like them.

Submitted by Rex Rodenbaugh

Title: Digital Citizenship

"Digital Citizenship is a concept which helps teachers, technology leaders and parents to understand what students/children/technology users should know to use technology appropriately. Digital Citizenship is more than just a teaching tool; it is a way to prepare students/technology users for a society full of technology. **Digital citizenship is the norms of appropriate, responsible technology use.** Too often we are seeing students as well as adults misusing and abusing technology but not sure what to do. The issue is more than what the users do not know but what is considered appropriate technology usage." <http://www.digitalcitizenship.net>

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The site www.creativecommons.org is a great resource for images, audio, and video to use in presentations and school projects.

Submitted by Travis Shoults
Title: Writing Refutational Text in Science

This session was presented by Dr. Victor Sampson from Florida State University. Dr. Sampson stated that, “A refutational text introduces a common concept or idea; refutes it; offers an alternative concept, idea, or theory; and then attempts to show that this alternative way of thinking is more valid or acceptable.” Being able to write a refutational text is an important skill for students who would like to go into a science field and for developing logic skills in students. This is different from the persuasive writing assignments that we have been working on because a knowledge of the material is needed as well as having evidence based arguments as opposed to opinions.

An example of a high level refutational text from the following abstract was given.

In neurons, synaptotagmin 1 (Syt1) is thought to mediate the fusion of synaptic vesicles with the plasma membrane when presynaptic Ca^{2+} levels rise. However, in vitro reconstitution experiments have failed to recapitulate key characteristics of Ca^{2+} -triggered membrane fusion. Using an in vitro single-vesicle fusion assay, we found that membrane-anchored Syt1 enhanced Ca^{2+} sensitivity and fusion speed. This stimulatory activity of membrane-anchored Syt1 dropped as the Ca^{2+} level rose beyond physiological levels. Thus, Syt1 requires the membrane anchor to stimulate vesicle fusion at physiological Ca^{2+} levels and may function as a dynamic presynaptic Ca^{2+} sensor to control the probability of neurotransmitter release.

From: Dynamic Ca^{2+} -Dependent Stimulation of Vesicle Fusion by Membrane-Anchored Synaptotagmin. Science, Vol. 328. no. 5979, pp. 760 - 763

Although the specific language used may be difficult to understand, the parts of a refutational text are given. A thought is stated, refuted, and an alternative is offered. For more information on teaching these concepts a couple of power PowerPoint presentations are available for download from the esu13 website. They can be found in a folder under **Professional Development → Instructions and Intervention → Science Victor Sampson**. The following link is to a small portion of Dr. Sampson’s book on Scientific Argumentation, <http://learningcenter.nsta.org/files/PB304Xweb.pdf> . This book explains the process, gives 30 classroom activities, and is available to loan from the ESU.

Submitted by: Dan Valenta
Title: Inquiry, Engagement, and Historical Thinking: Transforming Teaching and Learning
Presented by Randal Ernst Lincoln Public Schools

For this workshop we were introduced to the “Big 5 Skills” in social studies. Those five skills are:

1. Sourcing
2. Contextualization
3. Corroboration
4. Close Reading
5. Using Multiple Perspectives

Our focus of learning and discussion was on the last two: close reading and using multiple perspectives.

Procedure wise, this is what we did:

1. Read the story for the main idea.
 - a. While reading have a pencil in your hand.
 - b. Write down the main idea.

- c. Share the main idea with neighbors, then with the class.
 - d. We would also source the information—who wrote it, when, where, and other questions as posed in the power point.
2. Read the story for a second time for contextualization.
 - a. Read with a pencil in your hand.
 - b. Underline those points that support your ideas of what were key ideas.
 - c. Share what you learned with your neighbors then with the rest of the class.
3. Then the class would read a second story and go through steps one and two.
4. To wrap things up the students will write the main idea or two points made in the readings, giving specific examples from the text to support their points.

Attached are two of the stories we read (along with the power points we watched). As we went through we followed a series of steps that allowed us to start on a simplistic level of learning and understanding to one of great depth.

Document #1

Jourdon Anderson
To
My Old Master

Dayton, Ohio, August 7, 1865

To My Old Master, Colonel P. H. Anderson
Big Spring, Tennessee

Sir: I got your letter and was glad to find you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Col. Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have come back to see you all when I was working in Nashville, but one of the neighbors told me Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here; I get \$25 a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy (the folks here call her Mrs. Anderson), and the children, Milly, Jane and Grundy, go to school and are learning well; the teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday-School, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated; sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks, but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Col. Anderson. Many darkies would have been proud, as I used to was, to call you master. Now, if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free-papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department at Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you are sincerely disposed to treat us justly and kindly—and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years and Mandy twenty years. At \$25 a month for me, and \$2 a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to \$11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages has been kept back and deduct what you paid for our clothing and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams Express, in care of V. Winters, esq, Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night, but in Tennessee there was never any pay day for the negroes any more than for the4 horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

In answering this letter please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve and die if it comes to that than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood, the great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

P.S.—Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,

Jourdon Anderson

SOURCE: Reprinted in Leon F. Litwack, *been in the storm so long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pages 333-335.

Document #2

SIDNEY ANDREWS, "THREE MONTHS AMONG THE RECONSTRUCTIONISTS." (Excerpted). [*Atlantic Monthly* (February 1866), 237-245.]

I spent the months of September, October, and November, 1865, in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. I travelled over more than half the stage and railway routes therein, visited a considerable number of towns and cities in each State, attended the so-called reconstruction conventions at Raleigh, Columbia, and Milledgeville, and had much conversation with many individuals of nearly all classes...

Before the war, we heard continually of the love of the master for his slave, and the love of the slave for his master. There was also much talk to the effect that the negro lived in the midst of pleasant surroundings, and had no desire to change his situation. It was asserted that he delighted in a state of dependence, and throve on the universal favor of the whites. Some of this language we conjectured

might be extravagant; but to the single fact that there was universal good-will between the two classes every Southern white person bore evidence. So, too, in my late visit to Georgia and the Carolinas, they generally seemed anxious to convince me that the blacks had behaved well during the war, --had kept at their old tasks, and labored cheerfully and faithfully, had shown no disposition to lawlessness, and had rarely been guilty of acts of violence, even in sections where there were many women and children, and but few white men.

Yet I found everywhere now the most direct antagonism between the two classes. The whites charge generally that the negro is idle, and at the bottom of all local disturbances, and credit him with most of the vices and very few of the virtues of humanity. The negroes charge that the whites are revengeful, and intend to cheat the laboring class at every opportunity, and credit them with neither good purposes nor kindly hearts. This present and positive hostility of each class to the other is a fact that will sorely perplex any Northern man travelling in either of these States. One would say, that, if there had formerly been such pleasant relation between them, that ought now to be mutual sympathy and forbearance, instead of mutual distrust and antagonist. One would say, too, that self-interest, the common interest of capital and labor, ought to keep them in harmony; while the fact is, that this very interest appears to put them in an attitude of partial defiance toward each other. I believe the most charitable traveler must come to the conclusion, that the professed love of the whites for the blacks was mostly a monstrous sham or a downright false pretence...

Going into the States where I went,--and perhaps the fact is true also of the other Southern States, --going into Georgia and the Carolinas, and not keeping in mind the facts of yesterday, any man would almost be justified in concluding that the end and purpose in respect to this poor negro was his extermination. It is proclaimed everywhere that he will not work, that he cannot take care of himself, that he is a nuisance to society, that he lives by stealing, and that he is sure to die in a few months; and, truth to tell, the great body of the people, though one must not say intentionally, are doing all they can to make these assertions true. If it is not said that any considerable number wantonly abuse and outrage him, it must be said that they manifest a barbarous indifference to his fate, which just as surely drives him on to destruction as open cruelty would.

There are some men and a few women—and perhaps the number of these is greater than we of the North generally suppose—who really desire that the negro should now have his full rights as a human being. With the same proportion of this class of persons in a community of Northern constitution, it might be justly concluded that the whole community would soon join or acquiesce in the effort to secure for him at least a fair share of those rights. Unfortunately, however, in these Southern communities the opinion of such persons cannot have such weight as it would in ours...

Three-fourths of the people assume that the negro will not labor, except on compulsion; and the whole struggle between the whites on the one hand and the blacks on the other hand is a struggle for and against compulsion. The negro insists, very blindly perhaps, that he shall be free to come and go as he pleases; the white insists that he shall come and go only at the pleasure of his employer. The whites seem wholly unable to comprehend that freedom for the negro means the same thing as freedom for them. They readily enough admit that the Government has made him partly their misfortune, and not wholly their fault, that they cannot understand the national intent, as expressed in the Emancipation Proclamation and the Constitutional Amendment. I did not anywhere find a man who could see that laws should be applicable to all persons alike; and hence even the best men hold that each State must have a negro code. They acknowledge the overthrow of the special servitude of man to man, but seek through these codes to establish the general servitude of man to the commonwealth....

[T]here are at least five things for the nation to do: make haste slowly in the work of reconstruction; temper justice with mercy, but see to it that justice is not overborne; keep military control of these lately rebellious States, till they guaranty a republican form of government; scrutinize carefully the personal fitness of the men chosen therefrom as representatives in the Congress of the United States; and sustain therein some agency that shall stand between the whites and the blacks, and aid each class in coming to a proper understanding of its privileges and responsibilities.

Transcribed by T. Lloyd Benson, Department of History, Furman University from the *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1866), 237-245.

Submitted by: Heather Staudenmaier
But I Don't Know What to Write About.....

Presented by: Belinda Epler, Theresa Logsdon, and Nyana Sims

This presentation was all about different ideas and techniques to help students come up with something to write about.

The first idea was called the "Heart List"; you give the students an outline of a big red heart and give them 5 minutes to write a list of everything they love.

The second technique they gave to us was to read the book I Wanna an Iguana by Karen Kaufman Orioff. Have the students write about something or persuading someone asking for something you want.

The third technique was to think of a candy bar and write a sentence that contains two things you can say about a candy bar.

Also think about a place you want to be: write a sentence that contains four things about this place.

These were just a few of the ideas that they gave us, there are several more in the hand out they gave us.

Submitted by: Marla Ellicott
Title: Teachers of Writing Lean on 3 Resources

Provide students a paper with a heart drawn on it. Give students about two minutes to list things they love. Save this paper for future use to help inspire writing ideas.

When asking students questions, be sure to use "W" words (Who, What Where, When, Why, and How). "D" words (Do, Does, and Did) only elicit yes and no answers.

Teachers of Writing Lean on 3 Resources

1. Students Writing
 - a. Read the writing aloud calling attention to the part of the text that includes the craft and name the craft that the author used.

- “As a writer, _____ decided to _____.”
- b. Suggest that students try this craft in their writing.
 - c. Call attention not only to the PRODUCT of a student’s writing but also the writer’s PROCESS and WORKSHOP MANNERS.

2. MENTOR TEXTS

- a. Read the book aloud simply for enjoyment.
- b. Reread the book another day, calling attention to the part of the text that includes the craft and name the craft that the author used.

“As a writer, _____ decided to _____.”

- c. Suggest that students try this craft in their writing.
- d. Make a student famous for imitating the craft when it does happen.

3. YOUR OWN WRITING

- a. Model by THINK ALOUD!
- b. Demonstrate on the same paper they use.
- c. Use a story over and over for many different teaching points.
- d. Let the students see the writing grow across several mini lessons.
- e. Sit among them occasionally and write!

Submitted by: Earl McConnell

Title: Technology Applications in the Physical Education Classroom

I learned how to make and use Quick Response (QR) codes which could be used for scavenger hunts with activities to be done at the predetermined locations. However, with our current policies on personal electronic devices I believe these activities will have to wait, for now.

The technology I would like to try would be a LED Projector. I would use the Projector for displaying activities such as **Adventure to Fitness**: <http://www.youtube.com/user/AdventuretoFitness1> to be used as a warm up activity. The LED Projector could also be used to help teach activities such as dance (<http://www.historyteam.pbworks.com/f/1920s+charleston.>) or other dances I am unfamiliar with.

There was also discussion about 2-3 minute activity breaks (as simple as some Jumping Jacks, push-ups, and sit-ups to using a projector for the Adventure to Fitness activity above) in the classroom between subjects to get students moving briefly. Studies have shown this to be effective for stimulating brain function.

Submitted by Paul Windsor

Title: Vocabulary Rubric—Laying the Foundation for effective reading comprehension

“All the Write Stuff: Strategies to Improve Your Students’ Writing in the CTE Classroom”

Presenters: Cory Epler and Tricia Parker-Siemers, NE Dept. of ED

<http://www.education.ne.gov/read> This is the Language Arts Education site. Select Workshops/Events to reach the ESU 13 Winter Conference for the full document.

An important component of helping students understand what they are reading is for them to have a firm grasp of the vocabulary associated with the subject matter. In Career and Technical Education courses, the vocabulary is many times unique to the subject matter and is obviously the foundation to mastering course content. For some classes, the vocabulary for a new unit can seem to be overwhelming. A tool that the conference presenters introduced to help in this process was the vocabulary rubric. The basic idea is to give students the vocabulary for the unit at the beginning of the unit and then use a grid (rubric) to assess from the beginning which terms students are familiar with and use a self assessment to determine how confident they are with a term. The students write the words in the rubric under the categories of Clueless, Heard of It/Don't Know It, I Think I Know, Expert!

The rubrics are collected from students and a determination is made as to which terms need to be the priority of focus. The idea is to identify those words that students have a confident handle of so as not to spend unnecessary time looking at those terms but instead focusing on the terms where there are gaps in understanding. Again, it is the vocabulary that lays the foundation for new learning. This also creates a foundation for students to effectively read textbooks, articles, etc. associated with the topics being covered. (See attached Vocabulary Rubric).

Sidebar—The presenters indicated that Lexile scores for reading material across the curriculum are consistently the highest in tech ed courses.

Vocabulary Rubric

What is the Vocabulary Rubric?

The Vocabulary Rubric directs students to reflect on vocabulary words and analyze how much they know about them.

Why use the Vocabulary Rubric?

Students have so many words to learn that it is impossible to spend the same amount of time on each word. It is also not necessary, so this rubric gives students and teachers an opportunity to see which words need the most instruction.

How do I use the Vocabulary Rubric?

1. Explain the rubric to the students, then give the list of vocabulary words. Use the following reproducible rubric form, or have students draw their own rubric.
2. Ask students to independently place each word in the column that best represents their knowledge of the word.
3. Collect, analyze, and use the results to prioritize your instruction to focus on the words that need the most instruction.

Vocabulary Rubric: How Well Do I know These Terms?

(Adapted From Words, Words, Words by Janet Allen [Stenhouse, 1999].)

First, write down the words for this activity under "Word List." Then read the words silently.

Afterwards, write each word under the heading that best describes what you know about it.

Clueless Heard of It/ Don't Know It I Think I Know Expert!

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.

Submitted by: Donna Skavdahl

Title: Units of Study for Reaching Writing

By Nancy Christensen 50 mini lessons- <http://vimeo.com/to> rep/albums

This session was on setting up a writer's workshop in your classroom.

Teachers of writing lean on 3 sources:

- 1) Students writing
- 2) Mentor texts
- 3) Model your own writing

Suggestions are while you are reading aloud books or stories to your students, stop and point out the 'craft' or style of writing the author is using. Encourage students to try this in their own writing. Model your own writing by thinking aloud. Use the same story over and over for different teaching points, so the students can see the growth in the writing process.

The mini writing lesson should be about 14 min. with only 1 teaching focus at a time. Be sure to use explicit language. Have students gather together to talk about their writing or example writings that you provide. Demonstrate and have guided practice time.

Writing workshops should be about 1 hour a day. Try to conference for 5 minutes with each child.

*encouragement is vital

*don't hijack a student's writing

*honor their accomplishments

*allow for kids to listen and talk to each other about writings

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.

Submitted by: Trisha Hunter

Title: Technology

The February workshop that I attended was on I-pads in the morning and afternoon. Two professors from UNL presented and had a lot of really good apps to share.

One of the first things they had us do was they created a quiz at kahoot.it They used it as an assessment tool. I could see using this in class to check for understanding. I have a quiz planned today using it.

The other one that I really liked was touchcast. It is a movie/ moodle live feed that you can record yourself. You can also bring up files or pictures and make it into a presentation and then the kids can watch it. It would work great if you where home sick, you could use this to explain the lesson for today from your house. I had the freshman use it to build an FFA video. They had a lot of fun with it. They imported it in to movie maker and then finished it. The cool thing that I really liked about touchcast is you can import a picture, and use it like a white board and record your own.

I thought that there was a lot of really good information. You can go to You Tube and type in techedge01 and there are over 150 videos that can help you become more tech savvy.

The last one that I really liked was Haiku desk. Mr. Shoult's group played with it and they built a history presentation with them narrating in the background with pictures of history from our area. So check a few of these sites out..... UNL Technology Edge and You Tube techedge01

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.

Submitted by: Tara Dunn

Title: Measuring Growth in Student Writing

Randi Saulter, Educational Consultant, demonstrated a quick summative assessment of student writing ability. Using this method, students are given a writing prompt with thirty seconds to plan. After planning, they are asked to write for three minutes on that topic. The instructor then scores the writing, looking for what she called "correct word sequences." The instructor gives points for correct capitalization, spelling and punctuation that are adjacent.

Ms. Saulter keeps it very simple, but she stated that the instructor could add other elements to check. Other elements might include: Commas in a sequence, quotation marks, etc. She also recommended counting total words so that a person can assess percent correct. The scoring system is pretty simple, but it might take a minute of explanation.

**Please see the appendix for a sample of the scoring we practiced doing at the conference.

I thought I would try this assessment using the paragraph prompts in the Treasures spelling workbooks. I think it will give a snapshot of their writing growth.

Submitted by: Andrew Brase

Title: Internet Blogging

At the in-service on 2-17 the BEST of what was presented was the use of blogging as another way to get kids writing. The website address is kidblog.org.

I was not convinced that this an effective way to get kids to write well as there is no feedback except from peers and even then, it is more about opinions rather than the actual writing. Teachers or students may start blogs and all posts are moderated for appropriateness. Students may get responses and respond to comments from all over the world. The idea is that it gets kids thinking and writing.

I wasn't convinced that this would be the most effective tool to teach writing. One positive thing is that teachers help students to be constructive, polite "internet citizens".

Submitted by: Sharen Lamert

Title: Step Up to Writing in Math by Debbie Valette

Students sometimes complain that they are good at math, but not at writing. Teachers can respond by saying that writing involves formulas, just like math. Many students prefer the formula for remembering the pattern of a basic eight-sentence paragraph.

T + TS + 3(K+E) + C = paragraph

T = title

TS= topic sentence

3 = three sets

(K+E) = key idea and explanation

C = Conclusion

= paragraph

$G_1 + g_2 + n(y + mr) + g_3 = \text{paragraph}$

G_1 = green (title)

g_2 = green (topic sentence)

n = number of sets

y = yellow (reason, detail, fact, or key idea)

r = red (explanation, example, elaboration, etc.)

m = number of reds

G_3 = green (conclusion)

= paragraph

These are formulas which are fairly rigid. Real life paragraphs are more flexible, but the presenter pointed out that we need to start with a basic paragraph. The first example is the one I will be using.

Topic sentences recommended for math paragraphs was to use an infinitive (to + verb), make a statement or use an occasion/position statement.

Submitted by: Karen Huntrods

Title: The Writing Revolution

The presenter suggested that we give students the sentence starters to speak accountably. She gave us five different sentences and suggested we make posters of these to be placed in our classrooms.

Draw the students' attention to these and discuss how and when to use them, as well as model these in the classroom with students. These five can also be used in writing. The sentence starters are as follows:

I have something to add....

I agree/disagree with you because...

I would like to add to what _____ said...

I have a different opinion,

I agree with what _____ said because

Submitted by: Brett Gies

Title: The Writing Revolution: How Writing Affects Thinking

Research is indicating that there is a strong connection between reading, writing, and speaking. Students who are exposed to a rich literacy environment are better speakers and writers. Students need a safe functional environment in order to acquire enhanced writing skills regardless of their skill level. Students also need a very strict writing process and instruction to acquire reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Research reflects that teachers should avoid using “fluffy” writing tasks such as designing and writing a post card, brochure, and flyers type activities. Writing requires deep thinking. Many times students can describe something in great detail, but they cannot write about it in great detail.

In order to improve students writing skill levels, we should teach students to use powerful words such as although, clearly, in addition to. These types of words are not used in our everyday speaking but carry a powerful impact when used in our writing.

The presenter provided numerous writing activities to teach writing. One of the strategies was incorporating the words because, but, and so. Using these three words will help students develop sentences as it requires them to think about the content before they begin to write.

Example activity using because, but, and so.

Directions: Complete the given sentences using because, but, and so.

Molecules may be organic....

Molecules may be organic, because _____

Molecules may be organic, but _____

Molecules may be organic, so _____

Anticipated student responses

Molecules may be organic, because they contain carbon and oxygen.

Molecules may be organic, but there are also inorganic molecules.

Molecules may be organic, so both organic and inorganic molecules are necessary for life functions.

The following activity is used to help students develop sentences. This activity can be used to teach students to think before they write by using the words, why, where, and how so they can write complete thoughtful sentences.

Directions: Expand the sentences using the question words.

Food is broken down.

Why? _____

Where? _____

How? _____

Possible student responses

Food is broken down.

Why? So small enough to enter cells.

Where? Digestive tract

How? Mechanically and chemically.

Expanded Sentence:

Food is broken down mechanically and chemically along the digestive tract so it is small enough to enter cells.

Submitted by: Barry Swisher

Title: Writing with iPads presented by Dr. Guy Tranin

Dr. Guy Tranin provided us with apps that can be used to write with iPads. The most beneficial and easiest to use would be Dictionary.com. The app can also be used with a computer but is more user friendly on the iPad.

Dictionary.com

Dictionary.com is an app that is simple to use and can be effective in writing for a student who struggles with spelling and meaning of words.

1. Go to the app store on the iPad and type Dictionary.com in the search box.
2. Touch the free rectangle. It will turn green and the word install will appear.
3. Touch the install rectangle. A circle will appear and you will be asked to enter your iTunes Store password. If you do not have one you will have to set up an account.
4. Once you have logged in the app will download. When it is finished the rectangle will have the word open in it. Touch open and you will be in the app.

When you open Dictionary.com the front page of the app will contain a word of the day along with the volume symbol next to it. If you touch the volume symbol the word will be spoken through the speakers.

Above the word of the day you will find a white rectangle that says search dictionary. You can touch the box and type in the word that you would like to define. The best function of this app is located to the right of the box. The microphone symbol is there and allows students to speak the word they are looking to define or spell.

Example: Student A knows how to pronounce a word but does not know how to spell it. Instead of using an easier word, student A pushes the microphone symbol and speaks the word. The word will appear along with the definition. Some students will shy away from using appropriate words because they do not know how to spell them which can limit the effectiveness of their writing.

Other functions on Dictionary.com include a thesaurus, translator, word of the day, blogs, trends of words being used around the world, and slideshows of words that deal with a current topic.

Other apps of interest

1. Blogger
2. Haiku Deck
3. Poetry Foundations
4. Padlet.com
5. Fanfiction.net

Submitted by: Dash Rohan

Title: Facts, opinions, and erroneous ideas in writing

Steps for identifying the difference between facts, opinions, and erroneous ideas:

1. Begin with the template provided. Show the kids an example and have them write in into the first or second column as necessary. For instance, sample sentences could be as follows: The earth revolves around the sun. (An obvious fact) The best constellation in the sky night is Orion.

(An obvious opinion) The moon is the brightest star in the night sky. (An obvious erroneous idea, because the moon is not a star.)

2. Generate a list of statements that are grade-level appropriate and approximately 45% fact statements, 45% opinion statements, and 10% erroneous ideas. Then have the students fill out the template with the where they think they should go, leaving off the erroneous ideas, because we don't want to focus on those. (The reason for so few erroneous statements is they function to trip up the kids, but also add an element of judgment, which is critical to the exercise.)
3. Ask the students which were facts, opinions.
4. If some pupils have difficulty, walk them through the identifiers of opinions vs. facts. Certain modifiers will be there more than others. (Comparison modifiers like *good (well), better, best; some, more, most; without a doubt; almost+ adjective and nearly +adjective; without a doubt and it is doubtful that....*)
5. Further to help determine fact from opinion teach the students to ask the following question: Can there be more than one side to this statement. Above I mentioned *The best constellation in the night sky is Orion*. Clearly one can see that it is possible to believe that, but also possible for others to have a differing viewpoint. Using the same construct as follows: *The best constellation in the night sky is Ursa Major*. All the facts hold up. One could say either, and so we know it is a matter of opinion on which two people can most decidedly disagree. That is contrary to the statement: Two plus Two equals four. Now, it is impossible for rational people (outside 1984) to make that statement. One must believe facts, because there are no other sides to them.
6. Repeat exercise as needed to drill students in the differences between facts and opinions.

**Please reference the appendix for the graphic organizer model and additional information on how to use this strategy.