3-5 Writing: Focusing on Organization and Progression to Move Writers

February Conference 2017
Presented by Karen Turner and Dianna Simons

- 2012 - 84%
- 2013 - 80%
- 2014 - 81%
- 2015 - 77%
- 2016 - 80%

New STAAR Test ...
What do you know?

There are ___ total multiple choice items on the newly revised STAAR Writing test.
There are ___ writing passages where the student reads a writing piece written by another "student." (These could be Literary Nonfiction, _____, _____, or _____ writing.)
Then, the student answers ___ revising questions where they have to make the writing better and ___ editing questions where they correct mistakes.
There are 24 total multiple choice items on the newly revised STAAR Writing test. There are 4 writing passages where the student reads a writing piece written by another "student." (These could be Literary Nonfiction, Fiction, Expository, or Persuasive writing.) Then, the student answers 8 revising questions where they have to make the writing better and 16 editing questions where they correct mistakes.
2016 STAAR Writing - One Composition...

Expository
4th Grade and 7th Grade

1 Very Limited
2 Basic Writing
3 Satisfactory
4 Accomplished

Not your typical Bell Curve...
What if for this STAAR year...

Every student who scored a 2 on expository could be moved to a score point of 3?

Expository:
- 787 students would move to a 5
- 476 would move to a 6
- 264 would move to a 7
Read Expository Example
Score Point 4

What do you notice?
What did the student do well as a writer?

From the 2016 Expository Scoring Guide

Questions to think about …
What did the student do well as a writer?

- How does the central idea anchor the development of the writing?
- What transitions are being used?
- Are there sentence-to-sentence connections?
- How are the ideas developed throughout the essay?
If we address organization and progression with EVERYONE during writing mini-lessons, we will see a big shift in our data.

- Planning before drafting
  - Are my ideas related?
  - Which ideas are the strongest?
- Understanding what it is I really want to say
  - Do my sentences connect to each other?
  - Does my writing flow? Do my ideas connect with each other? What can I eliminate?
  - Did I get into the topic/central idea quickly, and did I circle back to it in the end?
  - Did I sustain my focus, and did I provide quality details that were thoughtful?

Where to begin ...

One Step at a Time

Anchor Chart: What is Expository Writing?

- Explains something or shares information
- Focuses on a topic
- Contains facts, details, examples, and explanations
- Contains a conclusion
Comparing Narrative and Expository

Reading an Exemplar:

Go Back to Anchor Chart ...

What is Expository Writing?

(What makes this essay work?)

- Topic sentence that establishes the central idea
- All facts, details, and explanations support the topic sentence
- Concluding statement

Expository

- Identify a topic/thesis
- List facts & details
- Pump up ideas
- Group & organize ideas
- Describe examples

Narrative

- Identifying a story
- Clue words:
- In your opinion
- Tell about a time
- Tell the story

Exemplar:

Narrative or Expository?

Narrative

- means telling a story
- means writing about time
- tell about a
time...
tell the story...
tell about when...

Expository

- means writing about some thing
- explain...
- explain why...
- explain words:
- clue words:

SNAP! SNAP! The cats Himmie and Pippie are playing

Hotel... They both ended up their heads to the sky. If you go to the hotel,

they were at my friends place, and it was my BFFs 15th birthday, and

dad was working and my lady and the BFFs had to rely on the adults.

Leaving me with hunger. kleine geschenke, they caught op as our lunch and it had enough to eat.

The Grandview is a beautiful restaurant in the middle of the lake. While we were at a dock for the
great escape, but the dock just wasn’t used by many of normal actors.

Panama City Beach was beautiful. The coast was beautiful. We were at a normal, the

beach of Panama Beach. We had to check our clothes before we hit the
the boat where we had to try for Panama. Once we

wore. The next step was to check out of normal actors.

All facts, details, and explanations support the topic sentence

Concluding statement
Goals as a Writer:

Focus and Coherence - to explain: central idea, topic sentence, supporting sentences
Organization - make sure each paragraph and sentence leads to the next, and the piece closes with a concluding statement
Development of Ideas - support ideas with facts, details, and explanations of when, why, and how
Voice - select words and phrases that engage the reader and hear you on a personal level
Conventions - check grammar, sentence structure, and spelling, capitalization, and punctuation

Pre-Writing (Gathering Ideas)

2015 Expository Prompt

READ the information in the box below.

In the book If, the Author You'll Get, Dr. Seuss writes, "Nothing you can't get in writing. So get on your way!"

THINK about all the different places you could visit or things you could do in the future.
WRITE about something that you look forward to doing. Tell what you want to do and explain why you want to do it.

Be sure to...

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your writing in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure
Developing a Strong Central Idea

1. **Find** a territory or idea within your topic.
2. **Review and collect** relevant examples, ideas, information, and stories that could perhaps go into your essay.
3. Then, **ask** yourself, What do I really want to say about this topic?
4. **Reach** for the exact words and say the idea as a sentence. Think, Is this the general idea I want to explore?
5. Once, you have centered on an idea, try **saying it again** a bit differently. Do this until it feels exactly right and true.

*Gary Colman’s Bikes and Bullets*
### Practice: STRONG or WEAK?

| Playing basketball is good for me. |
| Spelling words correctly is a challenge for me that I have learned to accept. |
| My basketball coach makes us work hard which helps us to win games. |
| A special person is my aunt. |
| What does my family do together? |
Verbal Rehearsal: First ...

Have students share their ideas before going off to write.

I love ice cream...

- because you can add different toppings.
- because there are so many flavors.
- because it's refreshing on a hot day.

Verbal Rehearsal: Next, Think About Your Reasons ...

Think about the details and evidence to support your first reason.

I love ice cream because you can add different toppings.

For example, you can add chocolate sauce or butterscotch sauce. You can also add chocolate chips, nuts and sprinkles. The toppings are a reason why I love ice cream.

**Notice the way the student uses words like in addition, also, another example/ reason and refers back to key words from her central idea to close her paragraph.

Flash Drafts

10 minute essays...

Students need to be able to write freely, get their ideas on paper to build writing fluency.

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Making clear connections to the central idea...

Students need to practice reviewing ideas in their drafts to decide whether they truly support the topic sentences of each paragraph.

Lucy Calkins recommends that student underline two or three key words in the topic sentence, and then reread to see if the information is related.

My basketball coach makes us work hard which helps us to win games.

We run 10 laps around the gym so we don't get tired when we are playing our games. When I first started practicing, 10 laps seemed like an awful lot! I could hardly finish and sometimes I had to walk a few laps. Now I don't get tired any more.

We practice running to the basket and shooting layups until we make 10 layups. Once, when I was having a really bad day, I was the last to finish. I had to keep trying while all the other players were getting water.

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If all students in the classroom had computers, we would be able to learn more.

Students should use their computers to research their own answers instead of asking the teacher. For example, instead of asking who won the Battle of the Alamo, kids could look it up themselves. And they could find out for themselves things like, which planet is bigger, Jupiter or Neptune? Or how much does an elephant weigh?

Students would learn math more easily because they could use computer games to learn math. In a game like Jumping Jack Facts, you just get all the frogs jumping onto the right answers and suddenly, your teacher will say, "Wow! How did you learn that?"

Feedback (Conferring)

Writers progress in dramatic ways when teachers:

- acknowledge what the writer does well
- suggests next steps toward an ambitious but accessible goal
Questions to think about ...

- How does the central idea anchor the development of the writing?
- What transitions are being used?
- Are there sentence-to-sentence connections?
- How are the ideas developed throughout the essay?

Essay Structure - (not a formula)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love ice cream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Idea Sentences:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because...</td>
</tr>
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Moving up and down the ladder of abstraction ...

Moving from:
big idea detail
big idea detail
big idea detail

Ways to Push Our Thinking ...

In other words...
That is...
The important thing about this is...
An example of this is...
This gives me the idea that...
This shows...
This connects to...
I see...
The thought I have about this is...
To add on...
What surprises me...
Many people think... but I think...

Checking in on the process... Sharing examples.

My mom is my best friend
● because she buys me things
● now that I am older
● when I am at home
Reasons are not parallel.

My mom is my best friend
● because she is a good cook
● because she dresses well
● because she works hard at her job
Reasons do not support/match central idea.

My dad is my best friend and my mentor
Central idea is two-pronged. Writer would need to prove both parts and gather reasons to support both.

My mom is my best friend
● because she is fun
● because I have a good time with her
● because she listens to me
Reasons are overlapping.
Show Me ...

When?

Why?

How?

Brainstorming:

- My father is my most important teacher because he taught me to love work.
  - serving hot waffles on Christmas day, being happy to do it, making work wonderful
- My father is my most important teacher because he taught me to love writing.
- My father is my most important teacher because he taught me one person can make a difference.

Central Idea: My father is my most important teacher because he taught me to love work.
- I taught me to love work.
- He taught me to love writing.
- He taught me one person can make a difference.

Read Another Exemplar by Lucy Calkins

My Father is My Most Important Teacher

Original Version

One reason my father is my most important teacher is because he taught me to love work; for example, he took me sailing at the end of summer and told me he was happy to go to work. When I asked him why, he said, “I love work.” Seeing him so happy to go to work made me realize that work can be wonderful. Another example shows this is every Christmas morning, my dad was drive the hospital delivering waffles, ready to make waffles for all the doctors and patients. Dad wasn’t sad to go. I asked him why, he didn’t want someone else and he admitted he loved going to work. “It’s my hobby,” he said. I wanted to grow up and find work that I loved as much as he loved his. My dad taught me to love work.
Organizing for Drafting

1. Reread each piece of evidence.
2. Look for parts that match your reason. Underline parts that match.
3. Decide if you need to cut or revise.

Questions:
Does each bit of material develop the central idea and reason?
Does the material as a whole provide the right amount and right kind of support?

Building a Cohesive Draft

- Sequence your ideas in a logical way.
- Use effective transition words, connecting one idea to the next.
- Repeat key words from central idea.

- When you want to give a new example or reason...
- One example that shows this is...
- For instance...
- One time...
- When you want to add on within the reason or example...
- Another example that shows this...
- Also...
- In addition to...

Transition Words
Revising

Powerful Beginnings

Hooks & Leads

The introduction can use the same type of leads a student might use in narrative -

- Dialogue
- Sound
- Description
- Statement
- Action

However, the leading sentence must flow into the central ideas which is also included in the introduction.
A Good Introduction:

- Grabs the reader's attention
- Is connected to the topic of the composition
- Leads the reader to the central idea

Introductions need to be short because they also have to connect to the central idea.

Try it!

Write a lead for this prompt.

Try it 3 ways...
- Dialogue
- Sound
- Description
- Statement
- Action

In the curriculum...
Thoughtful Conclusions/Endings

Conclusions/Endings

Look at mentor texts to see the different ways authors end their pieces.

A Good Conclusion

- Summarizes the composition
- Tells how the writer feels about the topic
- Leaves the reader with a final thought

In the curriculum...
Revising Questions

**Organization** - Is my central idea clear? Are all of my ideas strongly related to my central idea?

**Focus and Coherence** - Is my supporting information focused? Is it in a logical order? Do I have sentence-to-sentence connections that help the essay flow? Have I included enough supporting information?

**Development of Ideas** - How can I support my ideas with strong examples? Are my facts, details, and explanations specific and well chosen?

**Voice** - Have I included interesting facts and ideas and described them in an engaging way? Do I use purposeful and precise words that show I care about my topic?

Resources available to you...

- Elementary Curriculum Website
  - Units of Study
  - Writing lessons
  - Texas Write Source Correlation (2nd-5th)
  - Getting to the Core of Writing lesson links
- New Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing (K-5) on campus
- District Rubrics and Student Writing Samples
Example Introductions

"Want to play Monopoly?" my sister asked me. I couldn't believe she was asking me to play a game with her. But then again, it is one of our favorite family games to play together. We like to play Monopoly because it is a fun way for our family to be together, without arguing about our usual family stuff.

3 Example Conclusions

1. I will always say 'yes' when someone in my family asks me to play Monopoly. I think even my sister would agree with me when I say these are some of our best times together.
2. Playing Monopoly is one of my family's favorite activities to do together. When we are playing this game, we don't even think about the usual family stuff that gets everyone so upset.
3. I think playing Monopoly is the best thing a family can do together. It helps us forget our worries and we can pretend we own all the property on the Monopoly board.