

Life today seems to center around technology. It amazes me how a six-year-old can work her way around an iPhone without thinking about what steps to take. My nieces and nephews have tablets and play games and videos to keep themselves occupied while the adults sit and talk, make meals together, or discuss the “adult” things of life. I find it mind-boggling to see the number of adults who walk around my school campus with their “faces in their phones.” Laws prohibit the use of texting and driving, and most states allow only ‘hands-free’ devices while a vehicle is moving. Those devices are great as a distraction for children during those times when the adults talk, but it seems that they are a distraction to people of all ages.

This is why I have decided to center my [innovation plan](#) around the use of technology in a Blended Learning Classroom and on how to create a way to start engaging student learning through a COVA-driven blended classroom. It is time for my students to apply the tech skills they have right now to the learning processes that they will need for tomorrow.

The Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Activities plan detailed below covers one aspect of my English Language Arts Classroom- the Writing Process. Regardless of the texts of literature covered in my classes or the material covered in any class, writing is an integral element of all academic work. There is not a course in which students are not expected to create authentic artifacts of their learning. The Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Activities plan will help students in all coursework from academic courses to the career and technology programs housed within my building.

Using the backward design method discussed by Dwayne Harapnuik and L. Dee Fink, I was able to come up with my BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) for my students. My goal for them is to become more comfortable and confident with writing and the writing process. It seems simple, but there will be a lot of time, hard work, and learning put in to make it a reality. I was able to utilize Fink’s ideas and those proposed by Dr. Harapnuik and the BHAG to draft a plan to start bringing the concepts of a blended classroom and the goal of improving student writing skills one step closer to fulfilling my innovation plan.

Learning Environment & Situational Factors to Consider

1. Specific Context of the Teaching/Learning Situation

How many students are in the class? Is the course primary, secondary, undergraduate, or graduate level? How long and frequent are the class meetings? How will the course be delivered: live, online, blended, flipped, or in a classroom or lab? What physical elements of the learning environment will affect the class? What technology, networking, and access issues will affect the class?

- 20 to 30 students
- Secondary level
- Students meet daily (5X a week for 75 minutes each day)
- Class will be delivered live in the classroom (or other workspace), however will incorporate blended and flipped classroom components.
- Students will be encouraged to utilize the classroom and hallway spaces maintaining respect for others to provide a relaxed, peer-led environment
- Internet access, computer access

2. General Context of the Learning Situation

What learning expectations are placed on this course or curriculum by: the school, district, university, college and/or department? the profession? society?

- School district: Graduation requirement/Students are tested in the subject at the state level
- University/College level, Career and Technical post-secondary education; military enlistment and service; workforce: Students are expected to be able to engage in reading and writing on their own with minimal assistance from others.
- Society: People are expected to know how to read and write
- Professionally: Reading and writing skills requirements differ depending on the profession.

3. Nature of the Subject

Is this subject primarily theoretical, practical, or a combination? Is the subject primarily convergent or divergent? Are there important changes or controversies occurring within the field?

- The subject is practical. Good writing is the hallmark of an educated society.
- The subject is convergent. The skills utilized here are transferable to most forms of writing required in school, work, and personal life.
- Student engagement in any controversies should be minimal.

4. Characteristics of the Learners

What is the life situation of the learners (e.g., socio-economic, cultural, personal, family, professional goals)? What prior knowledge, experiences, and initial feelings do students usually have about this subject? What are their learning goals and expectations?

- Students come from all different socio-economic, cultural, personal, and family backgrounds.
- Students may have different professional goals or may not even have an idea of what they want to do after high school.
- Students generally have a basic understanding of how to read and understand a text. Reading levels and abilities may vary depending on educational status- IEP, GIEP, “regular education.”
- Students seem to always have an underdeveloped understanding of writing and the writing process.
- Students differ in opinion on their feelings for the course initially. (Some students are amenable to reading and writing, while others despise the idea.)
- Most often students hope to just pass the course to get credit and move on.

5. Characteristics of the Teacher

What beliefs and values does the teacher have about teaching and learning? What is his/her attitude toward the subject? students? What level of knowledge or familiarity does s/he have with this subject? What are his/her strengths in teaching?

- I believe that education is absolutely essential and that learning every day is how people become the best versions of themselves that they could ever possibly become.
- Reading and writing are integral to coherent, valuable information and the best way to avoid conflict.
- I insist my students better themselves by becoming better readers, writers, and learners, and I hope to guide them on that journey each day.
- I believe that I am very knowledgeable in the subject.
- I am good at forming relationships with students, engagingly explaining the material, and giving students quality feedback and chances to fix their errors so they may improve their skills and have a better understanding of the material.

References:

Fink, L. D. (2003). *A Self-Directed Guide to Designing Course for Significant Learning*.

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Questions for Formulating Significant Learning Goals

A year (or more) after this course is over, I want and hope that students will...

- Be able to conduct ample research on a topic(s) of their choice and write a cohesive essay or other document based on their findings.
- Apply the steps to the writing process in all situations in which they are required to synthesize a piece of original writing

My Big Harry Audacious Goal (BHAG) for the course: Learners will become more comfortable and confident with writing and the writing process utilizing the learned skills across all types of writing- formal, informal, creative, and educational- settings.

Foundational Knowledge

- What key information (e.g., facts, terms, formulae, concepts, principles, relationships, etc.) is/are important for students to understand and remember in the future?
- Communication is essential.
- Writing is an essential form of communication which is why we
 - Text
 - Blog
 - Compose songs, poems, movie scripts, essays, technical manuals, and contracts.
- Coherent communication prevents misunderstanding and conflict.
- Students will be able to conduct research and use the 5- step writing process to explore learning topics that interest them more deeply.
- The 5 steps of the POWER writing process. (Prewriting, Outlining, Writing, Editing, Revision)
- Prewriting: Choosing a topic and any other brainstorming/researching that should be conducted before outlining begins.
- Outlining: Create a basic idea of what information will be presented where within the essay/document. Can be done in written form, graphic organizer, or by any other means that works for the student.
- Writing: Creating the essay/document. (First draft.)
- Editing: Students meet with peers/teachers to go through the first draft to make corrections during face-to-face conferencing time.
- Revision: Make changes to drafts after editing meetings have been conducted.
- How to conduct proper and usable research.
- How to cite sources.
- How to reflect on their learning process (by use of ePortfolio).
- What key ideas (or perspectives) are important for students to understand in this course?
- Writing is a critical skill used in almost every facet of life and profession in order to deliver information to other people.

- Writing is a skill that takes a lot of practice, but it is a skill that can be acquired by anyone that is willing to take the time to learn how to do it.
- Reflecting on the learning process is imperative in the journey of becoming a better learner.

Application Goals

- What kinds of thinking are important for students to learn?
 - Critical thinking, in which students analyze and evaluate sources for bias and their own and others' writing for logic and coherency.
 - Creative thinking, in which students imagine and create the direction of their writing from topic selection to final submission.
 - Practical thinking, in which students solve problems and make decisions as to drafting, revising, and editing their work and that of others.
 - All three of these types of thinking are important for students to learn because all three of them are used when writing.
- What important skills do students need to gain?
 - Students need to learn how to conduct research.
 - Students need to learn how to organize their thoughts into a piece of writing coherently.
 - Students need to learn how to incorporate their research into their writing.
 - Students need to learn how to cite sources used in their writing.
 - Students need to learn how to accept constructive criticism from others to improve their skills.
 - Students need to learn how to give constructive criticism to their peers to help their peers improve their skills.
 - Students need to learn the importance of rewriting their drafts.
 - Students need to learn how to reflect on their learning process as well as how to see the value in the reflection process itself.
- Do students need to learn how to manage complex projects?
 - Complexity is dependent upon the educational environment, task, and individual student ability; therefore, the student may need to manage a complex text.

Integration Goals

- What connections (similarities and interactions) should students recognize and make...:
- Among ideas within this course?
 - All writing is conducted using the five steps of the writing process.
 - Different types of writing may adhere to different rules. (creative writing vs. academic/professional writing etc.)

- Among the information, ideas, and perspectives in this course and those in other courses or areas?
 - Students will be able to use the five steps of the writing process in any writing assignment given in any other course.
 - Students will be able to use the same skills learned in research-based writing in any of their other courses.
- Among material in this course and the student's own personal, social, and/or work life?
 - Students will be able to use and apply the writing skills learned in this course in any other facet of their life. (Academically, professionally, or socially.)

Human Dimensions Goals

- What could or should students learn about themselves?
 - Students could/should learn that they are capable of writing if they practice.
 - Students could/should learn that constructive criticism is an important part of the learning process and that not being perfect is acceptable at all stages of the process; learning that we get things wrong and finding out why is how we improve our talents and skills.
- What could or should students learn about understanding others and/or interacting with them?
 - Students could/should learn that helping and receiving help through peer revision relationships is the number one best way for them to become better at writing.

Caring Goals

What changes/values do you hope students will adopt?

Feelings?

- I hope that my students will change their dislike for writing and learn that the skills learned here can be transferred to any form of research in most subject areas at least in the planning stages of academic work.

Interests?

- I hope that students will be able to write about topics that they are interested in. They will have the opportunity to learn more about the topic by conducting research as well as the chance to share their findings with others. They may even be able to use their writing to create significant changes in their lives.

Values?

- I hope that students will be able to see the value that writing will have in their academic life as well as their future careers.
- I hope that students will find the value in reflecting on their own learning.

"Learning-How-to-Learn" Goals

- What would you like for students to learn about:
- How to be good students in a course like this?
 - That taking chances is a good thing.
 - Challenging yourself to learn and try something new will make you better.
 - Accepting and learning from constructive criticism is a necessary part of learning and of life if you ever want to truly achieve your goals.
- How to learn about this particular subject?
 - Practice, time, and patience will help you become better at writing.
 - Hard work will be necessary.
 - Working with and learning from others will make you a better writer.
- How to become a self-directed learner of this subject, i.e., having a learning agenda of what they need/want to learn, and a plan for learning it?
 - Students should compile a list of topics that they would like to explore through their writing.
 - Students must have a list of what they need to be working on during their writing project time. (Brainstorming, researching, drafting, etc.)
 - Students must have an understanding of time management in order to make sure that they are completing their projects on time.
 - Students should complete a weekly learning self-reflection on what they have learned and accomplished through their writing each week.

References:

Fink, L. D. (2003). *A Self-Directed Guide to Designing Course for Significant Learning*.

Jossey-Bass

Harapnuik, D. (2016, June 13). *Why you need a BHAG to design learning environments*.

harapnuik.org. <http://www.harapnuik.org/?p=6414>.

OVERARCHING WRITING GOAL & 3 COLUMN TABLE

BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) – Learners will become more comfortable and confident with writing and the writing process utilizing the learned skills across all types of writing- formal, informal, creative, and educational- settings.

Learning Goals	Learning Activities	Assessment Activities
Foundational: • Communication is essential. • Writing is an essential form of communication which is why we ○ Text ○ Blog ○ Compose songs, poems, movie scripts, essays, technical manuals, and contracts. • Coherent communication prevents misunderstanding and conflict. • Students will be able to conduct research and use the 5- step writing process to explore learning topics that interest them more deeply.	Review of the writing process. Writing Process Animation The Writing Process Overview P.O.W.E.R. Writing Workin' It: High School Writing for Teens Everything's an Argument Transitions in Academic Writing How to Use Transition Words and Sentences in Essays Academic Writing: Types and Definitions	• Students will have to use each of the 5 steps of the writing process in their writing. • Students will conduct research and properly cite sources in their writing projects. Online Writing Lab at Purdue

Application: Students will choose a topic to research and then use the writing process to write about what they have learned on the topic. They must cite sources used in their writing.	- Allow students to choose a topic. - Go over outlining or graphic organizer use. How to use graphic organizers Graphic organizer templates 5-paragraph essay template Fact and opinion graphic organizer Persuasive Essay graphic organizer - Review rules and procedures for peer revision meetings and editing worksheet use. Peer Review in the Classroom How to Give Good Feedback Peer-to-Peer Learning Can Change the World How to be a Great Peer Editor	- Brainstorm a list of ideas. - Reference list of all sources consulted/ annotated bibliography. - Complete an outline/graphic organizer to organize thoughts. See Learning Activities Column - Draft of essay with citations - Editing worksheets Peer Editing Forms 1 Peer Edit Response Form 2 - Final submission of essay
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Integration: Students will be able to apply the rules of the writing process in order to complete any writing assignment in their academic, personal, or professional lives.	- Explore other areas in life where students will have to use writing. Students will consider future goals and post-secondary paths such as Career and Technical Education, two or four-year college, military enlistment, or immediate entry into the workforce and how their ability to communicate through the written word will be vital to those plans. - Same as listed above	Discussion - Writing assignments for other courses or personal choice writing work. - Students will be asked to design a graphic that shows how the skills learned will apply to other areas of education and post-secondary plans
Human Dimension: Learners will evaluate the importance of practice, patience, and constructive criticism in the writing process.	- Discuss the importance of taking one's time researching, drafting, and editing in writing. - Discuss how to give and use constructive criticism appropriately when working to help others achieve their learning goals.	- Discussion - Students will be asked to reflect on the stages of the process - Blog or e-portfolio Writing Process Animation
Caring: - Feelings - Interests - Values	Students will be presented with the opportunity to research several topics of their interest	

	and select one for development. - Students will be encouraged to use any sources they deem appropriate and helpful to their research and writing process. - Student will be encouraged to share information about their topics and source materials for others who may be researching similar topics in their class and in other classes by providing information into a “global doc.”	
Learning How to Learn: Learners will evaluate what they have learned about the writing process or something that they have discovered about their own learning through their writing each week.	Create an e-portfolio or blog that allows for an area for students to self-reflect on the work their peers and they have done. Writing Process Animation	e-Portfolio/ Blog Writing Process Animation