

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS

PROJECT SIGNATURE PAGE

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

EDUCATION

PROJECT TITLE: Meaningful Homework in a Secondary English Classroom

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DATE OF SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE: 11/29/18

THE PROJECT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE PROJECT COMMITTEE IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
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Meaningful Homework in a  
Secondary English  
Classroom

by

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A Project Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree

in

Education

California State University San Marcos

Fall, 2018

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

The purpose of this curriculum project is to model homework that focuses on purposeful planning, skill building, and student choice for a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English class. The homework assignments mirror the four major skill sets identified in the California Common Core English Standards and California English Language Developments Standards: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. The first homework model is on Reading, where students read a novel of their choice and write a children's book that demonstrates their ability to summarize key concepts and themes in their own words. The second homework model is on Writing, where students demonstrate their ability to present the same theme or message throughout a variety of written genres. The third homework model is focused on Listening and involves an adult interview based on a political topic of the student's choice. Students develop questions, conduct an interview, evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric, and write an article. The fourth homework model is on Speaking. Students are provided opportunities to draft a speech, self-evaluate their work, and receive peer feedback. Each homework assignment includes a unit plan using the Understanding by Design Template, homework assignment sheets, graphic organizers, rubrics, and lesson plans.

*Keywords:* Gradual Release of Responsibility, Listening, Meaningful Homework, Reading, Secondary English, Skill Development, Speaking, Student Choice, Understanding by Design, Writing

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## Chapter One: Definition of Problem

This curriculum project focuses on the implementation of meaningful homework in a secondary English classroom. This chapter will include the background to the homework debate, a guiding question, the purpose of the project, a literature review preview, a methodology preview, the significance of the project, and definitions of terms.

### **Background to Problem**

Homework is a common practice in the educational world and has historically been used to help students to better understand and retain covered material, yet has gradually become a trivial task that is monotonous and dreaded by students (Warton, 2001). As the educational world adapts to modern times, the gap between educators who are for and against homework continues to widen. Bempechat (2004) claims that homework is a successful tool to provide students with skills such as motivation, learning from mistakes, and working toward achievement. Voohris (2004) has a similar theory and further argues that homework is an essential part of any teacher's curriculum because it helps to build responsibility and accountability in students. Rahal (2010) even claims that homework is a necessity for educators and has long-term benefits for children, including providing a positive attitude toward learning. Cooper, Greathouse, Lindsay, and Nye (1998) and Trautwein (2007) both argue that homework increases academic achievement and can be used to improve student overall test scores and course grade. Yet, despite traditional benefit, many educators continue to argue against the use of homework in educational practices. Warton (2001) contradicts claims that homework increases achievement, and Kohn (2007) later expands this theory to protest against homework stating "the positive effects of homework are largely mythical" (p. 1). Some scholars, like Henderson (2011), argue that homework has no direct correlation to student achievement and Buzukashvili, Feingold, and Katz (2012) conclude that

homework can even cause extreme stress to both students and their parents. This debate on homework has created a divide in the educational community between teachers who openly assign homework and teachers who refuse. Blazer (2009) confirms that there are positives and negatives to any educational practice, especially homework. So herein lies the ultimate question, should teachers assign homework? Blazer (2009) argues that the approach to homework should not be universal and instead should be differentiated to fit individual student, teacher, and district needs, meaning that if some teachers find homework beneficial, then they have every right to assign it. However, Blazer (2009) does warn against tedious assignments and presents ways in which homework can be meaningful to students. Thus, this project will approach the homework debate in favor of implementing homework in a meaningful way.

### **Meaningful Homework**

Homework can have a multitude of definitions and is implemented in a variety of ways depending on an educator's goal for students. What makes homework meaningful can also vary from educator to educator. Gill and Schlossman's (2003) research claims homework should be implemented with "academic and character-building purposes," (pg. 319) where Rahal's (2010) research demonstrates that homework should be implemented to "improve learning through better retention of factual information, increased understanding and encouragement of critical thinking" (p. 3). Further, the National Education Association (2017) states homework should improve student performance as measured through state testing. Combining a variety of approaches, Blazer's (2009) literature review of homework explains that in order to make homework meaningful, homework should include a clear purpose that is articulated to both students and parents, should reinforce skill building, should assess student knowledge, should be an opportunity to produce creative work, should develop good habits, and should intrinsically

motivate students to learn. Though educators can interpret the definition and implementation of homework differently, Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch (2006) argue that regardless of what homework assignments look like, homework must include authentic tasks that engage students in learning and give students purpose based on their personal needs and interests. This project seeks to provide four examples of meaningful homework projects that are rooted in research strategies that promote purposeful homework. For the purpose of this project, homework will be defined as independent work completed by a student and meaningful homework will be defined as homework that is engaging via student choice, focuses on skill development, and is produced and enhanced over a length of time.

### **Purpose of Project**

The purpose of this project is to present ways in which an educator can implement a meaningful homework curriculum into a High School English course. The guiding question for this project is: What could a meaningful secondary English homework curriculum look like for students in Southern California? This curriculum project will present homework as a necessary part of a student's education to promote skill building, accountability, and responsibility. The homework will provide students with the opportunity to build their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, which are the four primary skills identified in the California Common Core Standards and the four main skills identified in the California English Language Development Standards. Each set of homework assignments will focus on one of the four skills to narrow students focus on the development of that skill. Additionally, students will be given the opportunity to have choices in their assignments which will enhance individual interest. Through skill building and student choice, the curriculum becomes meaningful to students. This project will provide a meaningful homework curriculum for a secondary English course; however, the

strategies and bones of the homework assignments are adaptable into other subjects.

Additionally, the project will aim to potentially benefit current educators and attempt to create yet another solution to the never-ending homework debate.

### **Preview Literature**

The literature discussed in a later chapter will explore research-based strategies that will serve as the basis of my homework curriculum design. The first theme, Purposeful Homework Planning, details the need for homework planning and the lack of thorough supports for assessments (Rahal 2010). Following this concern, this literature discusses Wiggin and McTighe's (2005) backward planning strategy and Fisher and Frey's (2008) in-class student support tool for lessons, Gradual Release of Responsibility. Planning and instructional strategy research will focus on intended student outcomes and how to develop a well-supported homework curriculum that will help students reach the predetermined outcome. The second strategy, Skill Development, first focuses on the idea that homework needs to be more engaging (Admiraal & Buijs, 2013). Through the implementation of skill-building activities and assignments, students feel that their homework assignments are pivotal to their life-long learning goals and life beyond education and are therefore more engaging (Admiraal & Buijs, 2013). The third and final strategy, Student Choice, discusses how to make homework more engaging for students through the power of student choice. Personalized learning and student choice increase motivation in students and their desire to complete independent assignments (Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch, 2006). This literature reveals different tools and strategies to incorporate into homework assessments. These strategies and tools will serve as the basis for each meaningful homework assignments designed in this project. The four homework assessments will be

developed for implementation in a secondary English classroom and will focus on the four primary skills taught in an English class: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

### **Preview Methodology**

The methodology details the project design, participants, setting, instruments, and procedures. The homework projects created include four separate assignments that focus on building the four core English skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The project is designed around the needs and desires of my students, who are 10<sup>th</sup> grade, college preparatory, English students in a Southern California school district. There are two main instruments used in this curriculum project: Fisher and Frey's (2008) Gradual Release of Responsibility and Wiggin and McTighe's (2005) Understanding by Design. Lastly, the methodology section details the steps taken to create the curriculum, including how different research strategies are incorporated in the project to ensure the homework caters to individual student needs.

### **Significance of Project**

This project is significant because it can positively impact educators and students. This project can help educators by presenting an option to develop a course curriculum that implements homework that is meaningful to students and their life-long learning. The project can also help students to feel they are building skills that are useful outside the educational world, rather than merely completing busy work. This project aims to not only promote a homework driven curriculum but a curriculum that aims to make students responsible for the learning and accountable for completing assignments, a skill that will be essential after their educational career. Finally, the project will be extremely beneficial to fellow new teachers and me. Planning out lessons, units, and assessments can be extremely challenging but is entirely doable. I hope that this project can show new educators that purposeful planning can help students and teachers

in the long run by presenting strategies to make lessons and assessments more meaningful to a student's education.

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter first presented a frequently debated topic in education: homework. Second, the chapter revealed the guiding question to the curriculum project, which aims to find what meaningful homework can look like in a secondary classroom. Third, the preview to the literature promised a broader background to the homework debate and potential strategies that can make homework more meaningful to students. Fourth, the chapter then divulged what the methodology entails, including the steps taken to create a meaningful curriculum project. Finally, the chapter explained the significance behind finding meaningful homework and how it could potentially benefit students and educators.

### **Definitions**

The following are definitions for the terms I will use in this homework curriculum project.

#### **Achievement**

Achievement is a short-term assessment of a student's content comprehension through individual work.

#### **Homework**

Homework is independent work completed by a student, meaning it can be completed in the classroom when instructed *or* at home.

#### **Learning**

Learning is a long-term assessment of what skills and knowledge students have acquired and retained through class instruction.

**Meaningful Homework**

Meaningful homework is homework that is engaging via student choice, focuses on skill development, and is produced and enhanced over a length of time.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Homework is a constant area of contention in education, leaving a wide gap between teachers who assign and refuse to assign homework. Many educators who support the use of homework in their classrooms attempt to find the best way to approach homework in order to create assignments that are meaningful for students. This literature examines different strategies used within homework curriculum planning to make homework purposeful and worthwhile to students. The first strategy explores the importance of purposeful planning and how homework can be designed with specific intentions and supports. Second, the research emphasizes the importance of including skill building into homework curriculum, focusing on the four main skills in the English classroom: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Third, the literature presents student-centered learning and student choice as a necessary element in building homework assignments. The goal throughout this review is to use the research presented in the literature to build a foundation for meaningful homework assignments that can be implemented and adapted into a high school English curriculum.

### **Purposeful Homework Planning**

Educators spend much of their time, including free time, planning perfect lessons and activities for their students. This planning is a time-consuming process that is a necessity to provide engaging and educational lessons for students. Purposeful homework planning can make homework engaging and supported as well (Van Voorhis, 2004). This section outlines the need for homework planning as well as two supportive approaches to homework: McTighe and Wiggin's (2005) backward planning and Fisher and Frey's (2008) gradual release of responsibility model. The following literature explores research that will be the first guide in

building my homework project design and connects purposeful planning to a thoroughly designed homework curriculum.

### **Need for Homework Planning**

Van Voorhis (2004) discusses homework strategies that make homework more purposeful for students, and thorough planning is one of the necessary strategies. In Van Voorhis's (2004) research on interactive homework, he claims that "Homework remains a central part of the school curriculum that affects students, teachers, and families. Despite this reality, too little attention is paid to homework assignments and designs" (pg. 211). He continues with claims that more professional development time should be spent on the design and practice of homework and its implementation (Van Voorhis, 2004). Rahal's (2010) research also claims teachers spend much of their time developing in-class supports to prevent students from getting lost during instruction, yet neglect to include these same strategies in their assessments. Rahal (2010) advocates for the use of supporting strategies within assessments, since students are more likely to get lost doing work outside of the classroom where there is no direct teacher support or instruction at home. Rahal (2010) expands on this idea, claiming "homework should be fair and equitable, and support for its completion should start at the classroom level" and these supports should be thoroughly planned out before assigning homework (p.11). Educators can spend more time in class properly preparing students for independent work, that way they have a lesser chance of feeling confused and a higher chance of actually completing the assignment. Blazer's (2009) study on homework also reveals that educators who implement homework in their classroom should ensure that their assignments are purposefully planned and cater to many suggestions including:

Assigning homework that has a clear purpose [...] Use homework to enrich classroom culture [...] Match assignments to students' skill levels [...] Match homework to students learning styles [...] Assign a variety of homework [...] Prepare homework assignments carefully [...] Teach students skills [...] differentiate homework. (p.13-15)

Ensuring that homework meets the needs of each student, homework assignments require thorough planning and consideration, similar to daily lesson plans and in-class activities.

Students with varying needs and abilities cannot complete all homework assignments at the same speed, quality, or standard of their peers. Therefore, homework needs to be made up of living assignments that can be easily adapted and catered to individual student needs.

Eilam (2001) emphasizes the importance of allowing students to incorporate their interests into their assessment products. Teachers must also be held accountable and should include their knowledge of their students when developing lessons and assignments that will pique their interest from the start (Darling-Hammond & Olivia-Lynch, 2006). Students individual needs, especially those of students with IEP's and students who are English learners, should also be a factor when developing homework curriculum for a classroom (Bempechat, Li, Neier, Gillis, & Holloway, 2011). Eilam's (2001) research suggests that students who have academic disadvantages have a difficult time completing assignments compared to their non-challenged peers, revealing that supports are required to provide equity for all students. Bempechat, Li, Neier, Gillis, and Holloway (2011) add to this idea, claiming students of non-dominant backgrounds also suffer from lower homework completion rates because educators fail to include the proper supports to allow for equitable student success. Therefore, teachers must strive to purposefully plan their curriculum to support all students not only in the classroom but to have supports built into their external assignments as well.

### **Backward Planning with Support**

“Teachers are designers. An essential act of our profession is the design of curriculum and learning experiences to meet specified purposes. We are also designers of assessments to diagnose student needs” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2001, p. 13). Backward planning is a curriculum design strategy where educators design a whole unit or area of study and they start with the end or with the desired learning outcomes/goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2001). Should educators start with their intended goal, then all the supports, assessments, and daily lessons will meet planned goals.

Backward design is meant to help teachers create not only more purposeful and guided lessons, but assessments as well (Shumway & Berrett, 2004; Wiggins & McTighe, 2001). After implementing the backward design as part of their teacher education program at Brigham Young University, Shumway and Berrett emphasize that “reactions of the university students, cooperating teachers, and elementary, and middle school students regarding this activity have generally been positive” (2004, p.28). They elaborate their claim to conclude that backward design allows higher involvement from both teachers and students in purpose-driven curriculum development (Berrett & Shumway, 2004). Graff (2011) expands on this research by claiming that backward design can be complicated, because it requires a great deal of time and planning, but is hugely beneficial, especially to beginning teachers. Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) three-step backward planning process includes:

1. Identify Desired Results
2. Determine Evidence of Learning
3. Plan Learning Experiences and Supports

The reason this process is called backward planning is that the first step requires educators to start at the end to identify the desired results, including what you want students to learn or be able to do. The second step requires educators to determine what evidence would indicate that the students met the objective by providing a product that is evidence of their learning. The third step is to plan the learning activities and supports that would make it possible for the students to learn the objective and provide evidence of their learning. This project focuses on an assessment of learning and homework, which is what educators develop in step two and implement in step three. Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Understanding by Design template allows teachers to visualize what their unit or curriculum will look like and provides sections to detail our goals, outcomes, and student products. The Understanding by Design template is divided into three stages and includes the following:

1. Stage One – Desired Results: In this stage, the educator determines the desired standards, enduring understandings, essential questions, big ideas, what students will know and what students will be able to do. The educator then uses these desired outcomes to build the assessments. Using desired outcomes helps provide a purpose for different activities used to build skills in the classroom, including homework.
2. Stage Two – Assessment Evidence: In this stage, the educator determines what main performance tasks students will complete and other pieces of smaller evidence students will complete demonstrating they have reached the desired outcomes. These performance tasks can include summative and formative assessments, including homework projects and assignments. Once the educator has determined the assessments, then the educator will build purposeful lessons that will help students to complete each assessment.

3. Stage Three – Learning Plan: In this final stage, educators create lesson plans including daily learning activities that will help students to achieve their final desired outcomes. These desired outcomes allow educators to ensure that the lessons they are creating are directly tied to the assessments, including homework, and provides educators with the opportunity to provide proper daily supports for students. Educators should use this step to provide appropriate supports for the homework assignments as well.

Through this careful and tedious planning process, teachers can ensure that their assessments are meeting standards and are therefore more purposeful (Graff, 2011; Shumway & Berrett, 2004). For this project, the first step of the backward design will focus on the desired goal of skill building, and the stage two assessment evidence will be the homework curriculum. The stage three learning plan will provide supports specific to the homework assignments that will allow students to complete the task with accuracy.

### **Gradual Release of Responsibility**

Fisher and Fray's (2008) research explores the Gradual Release of Responsibility, an essential support to guide students toward individual success. Gradual Release of Responsibility is a teaching strategy that allows teachers to support students by slowly releasing responsibility from the teacher and giving it to students. The components of the gradual release model (Fisher, 2015) and how they can be used to make homework meaningful include:

1. Focus Lessons – Focus lessons are teacher-led and can be similar to direct instruction. These lessons can be used to provide background knowledge and can inform the students of intended outcomes and goals of assignments they will complete on their own. Within this project, these lessons will be used to discuss and assign homework at a more in-depth level to ensure students fully understand what they need to produce. These lessons will

include time for students to review and practice the skill before having to demonstrate the focused skill on their own in their homework assignment.

2. **Guided Instruction** – Guided instruction is where the gradual release begins, and the responsibility of classroom tasks shift from the teacher’s responsibility to the students. Guided instruction is used to build student skills with direct support from the teacher as the teacher performs tasks with the students. During this phase teachers can provide assistance to students as they begin working on a homework task in class, allowing the teacher to ensure that students comprehend the task before having to attempt to complete it on their own. In this project, the guided instruction will include opportunities for students to be working on their homework assignment in class with guided support and direction from the teacher. This guided instruction will consist of whole class participation, teacher examples, and larger group practice and participation.
3. **Collaborative Learning** – During this phase, the educator allows students the opportunity to work with peers to complete a task and thus removes themselves from performing the task with the students however the students are not entirely performing on their own. Collaborative learning provides students with an opportunity to work on homework tasks with others, allowing them to ask questions or clarify with their peers before having to complete a task entirely on their own. Within this project, collaborative learning will be time allotted in class for students to work on their homework with their peers, allowing them to work with others to identify areas of improvement and areas of strength. This time will be structured in lesson plans to allow time to work inside the classroom setting where the teacher can still be available for direct help and instruction if needed.

4. Independent Work – The final phase of the gradual release model grants students the opportunity to work on a task on their own. Before reaching this phase, students have already gone through three stages of instruction, teacher support, and peer support, thus providing students with the proper supports to complete a task or homework assignment correctly. Seeing as homework is an independent task that students complete on their own, within this project, this phase can be completed both within the classroom (to provide students with easier access to direct teacher support) or can be done outside the classroom where students complete work at home.

The Gradual Release model should be used in homework implementation so that students are more successful in completing the work and completing it correctly. Gradual Release allows the teacher to start an assignment in class with the student where direct support is readily accessible. The teacher can then have the students work on the task with peers or on their own in the classroom with an educator present to continue guiding them through when they may have questions or clarifications. Finally, students will be released to complete the work on their own, which again can be done within the classroom for added support or completed at home. The use of gradual release should be implemented into the lesson before releasing full responsibility of completing a task on a student. (Fisher & Fray, 2014). If students were merely given an assignment with no direct instruction or support from a teacher in the classroom, students were less likely to complete the assignment, let alone finish it correctly. Brock, Lapp, Flood, Fisher, and Han (2007) also found that students who were simply given work without explanation struggled to complete the work and gave up on it quickly. For all students to feel they can complete their work, it is essential that the assignments are carefully planned and are first introduced in the classroom so that the teacher can help students to start the work in class and it

becomes easier for them to finish at home (Rahal, 2010). This Gradual Release support is not something a teacher can simply implement on the fly, it must be carefully planned and become a purposeful support to best support students in their homework goals. Therefore, as I develop my homework curriculum, the design includes the Gradual Release of Responsibility support, where students are slowly asked to complete a purposeful and challenging assignment. Additionally, by gradually forcing students to become responsible for their work is a skill that will help them toward their life-long learning goals and will help students to recognize that their homework is meaningful.

### **Skill Development**

Moving beyond purposeful planning, ensuring that students feel engaged in their curriculum adds meaning to homework. Buijs and Admiraal (2013) suggest that students are less intrinsically motivated to complete homework assignments if the curriculum is not engaging. Adding on to this, Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch (2006) claim students do not feel engaged in school work if they think it will not benefit them in the future and suggest that homework needs to have a clear purpose “other than avoiding a zero” (pg. 9). To engage students in homework and encourage them to complete it, Buijs and Admiraal (2013) argue that “in-depth knowledge and complex skills” need to be included in a curriculum (pg. 771). Eilam (2001) adds to this concept, recommending that educators include the acquisition of general skills into curriculum and found in their study of student performance that students received higher scores in homework assignments that were geared toward life skills and lower achieving students were also more likely to complete the assignment.

Ravenscroft, Waymire, and West (2012) argue that these life skills should be taught in the classroom and practiced individually through homework curriculum. Bembenutty (2011)

specifies these life skills, stating “homework assignments can enhance the development of self-regulation processes and self-efficacy beliefs, as well as goal setting, time management, managing the environment, and maintaining attention” (pg. 449). These life skills can be easily incorporated into homework curriculum; for instance, teachers can assign a project-based assessment and provide students several weeks to complete it, providing them with an opportunity to use self-regulation and time management skills to complete the task. Christen and Gomez (1987) claim that such skill-building activities connect school to real life experiences and provide a purpose for students, encouraging them to complete homework tasks at a higher rate than rote memorization assignments. Buijss & Admirall’s (2013) research also found that rote memorization does not actually provide students with learning skills that they can use in the future and therefore would not reflect a meaningful homework assignment

Skill building can also be easily incorporated into a curriculum and presented to students if standard based learning is a priority in the classroom. The California Common Core Standards for English Language Arts (2013) frame their standards around four essential skills students need to learn: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. These same skills are also a priority in the California English Language Development Standards (2012). By incorporating these standards and emphasizing skill development in the classroom, educators “address the demands of today to prepare students to succeed tomorrow.” (CA CCSS, 2013) The implementation of lifelong learning, or the ideas that the skills you are learning now will be useful in the future, encourage students to become more aware of what they are learning and they will be more likely to retain the information (Deere, Eaton, & Gangluff, 2004; Ravenscroft, Waymire, & West, 2012). Thus, through the inclusion of skill building into a homework curriculum, students will be more likely to find homework worth their time and energy.

### **Student Choice**

Educators need to plan a well thought out homework curriculum and begin to implement strategies to promote meaningful homework, and it is important to note that “homework should be fair and equitable, and support for its completion should start at the classroom level” (Rahal, 2010, p. 9). Rahal’s (2010) research suggests that the best way to start the implementation of meaningful homework is to start in the classroom with getting to know your students so that you can implement a variety of strategies catered to their needs. Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch (2006) argue that providing student choice increases meaning in homework and state that when students have a “hands-on role in their learning [it] can be a high-level motivator” (pg. 12). Many strategies exist to implement student choice into a curriculum, including personalized learning.

Personalized learning, or the implementation of individualized instruction, can be defined as "tailoring learning for each student's strengths, needs and interests [...] to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible." (Kennedy, Patrick, & Powell, 2013, p. 4) Personalized learning caters to student choice by allowing students the opportunity to identify their strengths, needs, and interests in the curriculum choices they make. All students come from different backgrounds and with their respective backgrounds, require different supports from their teacher. Personalized learning allows teachers the opportunity to incorporate specific students' needs into daily classroom rituals, instruction, and, relating to this curriculum projects, assessments or homework. (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011; Easley, 2017; Kim, 2012) As educators, we cannot expect that all students are going to take the same assessment prompt and all succeed. Educators have to provide specified and individualized supports for students within the homework design, similar to what educators do in day to day instruction. (Rutledge &

LeMire, 2017) Thus, through personalized learning, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to recognize if a student may or may not become frustrated with an assessment before assigning it to provide the right supports. (Kim, 2012; Headden, 2013) To do this properly, teachers must work with students to discover their individual needs, interests, backgrounds, and learning profiles. Through the use of current technology, teachers can easily gain this information from students through surveys, google forms or online discussion boards. (Demski, 2012) Later in this chapter, the literature will focus on research that implements ideas from personalized learning and are later implemented in my homework curriculum.

Part of a personalized learning curriculum is providing students with choices in what they learn and how they learn it. Taber-Daughy (2005) argue that students generally have higher achievement in classrooms where they have some choice in the classroom. Berry and Wickett (2009) describe student choice as a self-differentiating method where students are "making choices regarding task, content, solution processes, and working conditions" (pg. 133). Educators who are hesitant to provide students with choice in the classroom should be aware that they can control what students choose in a variety of ways including instructional methods, assessment topics, or project mediums. Gay (2010) allows students to select issues they are passionate about for essays and discussion topics to let students of a diverse population to choose issues more closely related to their culture and background if desired. Cochrane, Davis, Mires, Murphy, and Seneviratne (2013) allow students to select assessment topics and mediums, claiming this strategy results in higher performance from students who produce projects that demonstrate a higher understanding of content. This method of teaching forces teachers to allow their curriculum to be flexible to adapt to student needs and choices (Griffiths, Miller, & Risser, 2013). This forced flexibility may be challenging to teachers, having to create separate prompts

and rubrics, however, by letting go of control, students will take the reins and produce coherent and successful work (Dredger, 2008). After all, if students are producing work and are showing interest in assignments, the extra work from the teacher's side should not seem like a difficult choice to make when developing curriculum.

### **Summary of Chapter**

The goal of this literature review was to establish a ground from which to base my homework curriculum project. The literature review explored three strategies to directly implement into my curriculum project: skill development, purposeful planning, and student choice. Chapter three describes the methodology used to create a meaningful, high school, language arts homework curriculum.

### Chapter Three: Methodology

All teachers are required to assess their students in one way or another. Assessments can range from extensive exams to in-class checks for understanding; however, one of the most common forms of assessment is homework. There is much debate over homework policies, and it has become an area of contention for many educators, parents, and students. Though it is suggested that homework can relate to achievement, many students still see homework as a necessary, but not desired task (Trautwein, 2007). Therefore, for students to become more positively invested in homework, teachers must discover a way to make homework more meaningful. Consequently, my project attempts to provide various homework assignments that can be deemed worth students' time and effort and therefore meaningful. This chapter describes the project design, participants, setting, instruments, and procedures.

#### **Design**

The design for this project was to build homework projects that could be implemented in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English class that focused on purposeful planning, skill building, and student choice. The homework assignments mirrored the four major skill sets discussed in the CA Common Core English Standards and CA English Language Developments Standards: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. To implement purposeful planning, each of the four homework assessments was designed based on a backward design model and included lesson plans that apply the gradual release model for instruction. Additionally, the homework design included assignment sheets, supplementary graphic organizers, and rubrics designed to be easily accessible to students. Each assessment focused on skill objectives and student choice, which are features that aid in developing meaningful homework. Students should be made aware of the main objectives from the start of the unit and rubrics should be provided early on to help students

see their objectives in writing and have easy goals to reach. The homework provided uses strategies of skill building, student choice, and development and improvement over time. The inclusion of these strategies built four homework assessments that are meaningful to students and can be easily adapted and modified to other grades and subjects.

### **Participants**

The project was designed for 10<sup>th</sup> grade English students in a college preparatory course. The students enrolled in the course attend a Title I high school located in an urban area of Southern California. The population of the school is mostly Latino, representing 75% of the student population, followed by Caucasian students at 17%, 6% representing students of two or more races, just over 1% representing Asians, and just under 1% representing African Americans. The school is located in a low socio-economic location where over 70% of the students participate in free or reduced lunches. Regarding student learning profiles, 11% of the student population is English Learners, and 49% are redesignated English proficient. From this 11% of students, 43% are long-term English learners who have been in the United States for over six years. Furthermore, approximately 60% of the population's first language is Spanish and use their native language at home. Additionally, 17% of the population is designated special education students and have either an Individualized Learning Plan or a 504 Plan. Finally, the school currently has a 90% graduation rate, yet from that percentage, only 38% qualify to attend UC or CSU schools.

### **Setting**

This project was designed for a southern California high school that is located ten miles east of the Pacific Ocean and approximately thirty miles north of the Mexican border. The district has multiple elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. This high school is

the original high school in the district and has very old buildings and facilities that lack modern conveniences and class opportunities for students. The school is one of the largest employers in the community. The community is nestled in a heavily populated county in Southern California. The community is lower in the socioeconomic range with dual household income averaging around \$61,000 a year and has a high majority of democratic voters. Viewing the community's total population compared to the school's population, they are similar in race, economic status, and political views.

### **Instruments**

Two main instruments guided the homework design: Gradual Release of Responsibility and Understanding by Design.

#### **Gradual Release of Responsibility**

The supports used in this project stem from Vygotsky's (1962) Zone of Proximal Development, which allows teachers to support students in the development of projects and ideas before having them complete tasks on their own. Fisher and Frey (2008) developed a Gradual Release Model that divides instruction into four steps, slowly transferring responsibility from teacher to student. The first step referred to modeled instruction is where educators model the instruction while students watch. The second, shared instruction is where educators and students do the activity together. The third, guided practice is a collaborative model where students do the activity and educators watch and guide students when needed. The fourth step, independent practice is where students do the action by themselves. Please see figure one for Fisher and Frey's (2005) Gradual Release of Responsibility visual. Using this Gradual Release Model means that much of the assignment will actually be completed in class with teacher support as

opposed to at home without teacher support. The only portion completed at home is independent practice.

### **Understanding by Design**

Understanding by Design is part of Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backward planning strategy that seeks to help educators plan units, lessons, and assessments with a purpose. The Understanding by Design template used in my homework project, created by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), is essentially a fill-in-the-blank worksheet that helps educators to plan out their units or assessments starting with the standards and goals that they want their students to reach. After establishing a goal, teachers can then choose lessons and supports that will help students to achieve that goal. The template includes the following:

1. Stage One – Desired Results: In this stage, the educator determines the desired standards, enduring understandings, essential questions, big ideas, what students will know and what students will be able to do. The educator then uses these desired outcomes to build the assessments. Using desired results helps provide a purpose for different activities used to build skills in the classroom, including homework.
2. Stage Two – Assessment Evidence: In this stage, the educator determines what main performance tasks students will complete and other pieces of smaller evidence students will complete demonstrating they have reached the desired outcomes. These performance tasks can include summative and formative assessments, including homework projects and assignments. Once the educator has determined the assessments, then the educator will build purposeful lessons that will help students to complete each assessment successfully.

3. Stage Three – Learning Plan: In this final stage, educators create lesson plans including daily learning activities that will help students to achieve their final desired outcomes. These desired outcomes allow educators to ensure that the lessons they are creating are directly tied to the assessments, including homework, and provides educators with the opportunity to provide proper daily supports for students. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) lay out the process in a graphic organizer called the UbD Template. You will find a completed version of the UbD template in the materials provided in chapter four that will detail the goals of each homework assessment and how students' choice and skill building are incorporated into meeting student goals. The use of Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Understanding by Design will allow teachers to better mold these homework projects to their classrooms by determining how each project can be adapted through creating goals and outcomes for students.

### **Procedures**

I took five steps to create the four homework assessments in this project. First, I reviewed the literature on the positive outcomes of homework and the best teaching practices and strategies to develop and implement meaningful homework. Second, I narrowed down the many viable strategies to create meaningful homework into three themes and used those as a basis to develop my homework curriculum. The third step was to implement the backward planning process and use the Understanding by Design template to determine the best homework product students could produce that would meet the meaningful homework standards of providing student choice and developing skills. After deciding what the homework product would be, the fourth step was to create assignment sheets, rubrics, and lessons that used the gradual release of responsibility model. The fifth and final step was to implement the curriculum.

### **Summary of Chapter**

The goal of this methodology was to present the design, participants, setting, instruments, and procedures that helped mold my homework project. The following chapter will be the materials for four separate homework curriculums that each focus on one of the four primary skills taught in English: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Each curriculum will include an Understanding by Design planning template, assignment sheets, rubrics, and lessons directly related to implementing homework instruction and gradual release of responsibility.

## Chapter Four: Project

In this chapter, you will find a meaningful homework curriculum that was developed for a tenth grade English class. The following homework curriculum includes four separate projects that each focus on one of the four main skills taught and built upon in the English curriculum: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The first step taken to make sure these assignments were meaningful was to ensure they helped students build skills (Bembenutty, 2011). Each of the four projects allows students to develop and enhance skills that can be used both inside and outside of the school realm, thus helping students to become more intrinsically motivated to complete and stay engaged with their assignment (Buijs and Admiraal, 2013). The second step taken to ensure these assignments were meaningful was to create them in such a way that provided students with personal choice (Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch, 2006). Each assignment has several opportunities for students to choose what their assignment will focus on and how they will produce it, thus providing students a higher opportunity to complete their assignment with accuracy (Taber-Doughty, 2005). In addition to including these strategies to make the homework more meaningful, each assignment will consist of purposeful planning and supported lessons to help implement the assignments. Each assignment has at least one lesson plan that will show how Gradual Release of Responsibility can be used to assign and support homework completion. Through the use of Gradual Release, students will not simply be assigned a project and wished some luck; they will be supported throughout, giving them more support and a better opportunity to complete the assignment with full comprehension on their own (Rahal, 2010).

The first project is a homework assessment that focuses on building and enhancing reading comprehension skills. The second assessment is a multi-genre project that allows

students to focus on their writing skills. The third provides students the opportunity to improve their listening skills. Finally, the last assessment will enable students to enrich their speaking skills. All four projects provide students with choice in their assignment and are implemented gradually to enable the teacher to offer proper supports as students complete their assignment. Using the strategies discussed in the literature review (purposeful planning, skill building, and student choice), the homework assessments attempt to address the homework problem by presenting one way in which homework can be useful in the classroom and how homework assignments can be meaningful for students. This chapter will include a curriculum overview that discusses what to expect from each assignment, a table of contents, backward design project overviews, lesson plans, homework assignment sheets, and rubrics.

### **Reading Homework Curriculum**

The following homework curriculum focuses on guiding students toward an advanced reading goal based on selected reading standards from the CA Common Core Standard for English Language Arts and from the CA English Language Development Standards. In this choice unit, students will be allowed to choose from a selection of texts and will read that text throughout the unit. Throughout their reading, they will develop and build upon their skills of identifying textual evidence to support a variety of claims. At the conclusion of the unit, students will use their textual evidence and claim to summarize their text in their own words in the form of a children's book. The curriculum provided displays texts appropriate for a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English class; however, the activities and homework tasks can be easily modified and incorporated into different grade levels and subjects. I highly recommend that educators only choose texts that they have read and are familiar with, that way the Gradual Release activities are easier for the teacher and allow the teacher to provide more support and knowledge to the students about the text. The following homework curriculum includes a backward plan using the Understanding by Design Template, homework assignment sheets, graphic organizers, rubrics, and lesson plans directly related to assigning homework through the use of gradual release of responsibility.

## Understanding by Design

**Subject Area:** English

**Grade Level:** 10

**Unit/Title Focus:** Reading to Understand

**Estimated Amount of Instructional Time:** 6 weeks

### Stage 1 – Desired Results

State Content and Common Core Skill Standards:

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – RL.10.1* – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – RL.10.2* – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

*CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.B.6.a* – Explain ideas, phenomena, processes, and relationships within texts based on close reading of grade-appropriate texts, using increasingly detailed sentences, and an increasing variety of general academic and domain-specific words.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand how one text can have multiple messages.

### **Essential Questions:**

Why is reading an essential life skill? How can one better understand a text?

How can text be interpreted?

Big Idea(s)

Using textual evidence to understand and interpret texts

Demonstrating reading comprehension through summarizing

**What students will know:**

Definition of textual evidence, theme, and summary

**What students will be able to do:**

Students will be able to use textual evidence to support analysis of a text

Students will be able to use reading comprehension skills to summarize a text

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence**Performance Tasks:**

Children’s Book - will demonstrate student comprehension of choice novel and student ability to summarize key concepts and themes in their own words.

**Other Evidence:**

Dialectical Journal – will demonstrate student ability to analyze text and identify textual evidence to support and explain claims.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

In-class reading and discussion – students will be separated into groups and will discuss novels in a literature circle format; students will have the opportunity to discuss their selected novel with peers who are reading the same text and peers who are reading a different text

Weekly progress checks and goals – students will establish self-goals for how many chapters to read each week knowing the deadline for the final assessment; the teacher will check that students are reaching individual goals via weekly progress check and monitoring of dialectical journal entries and completion

Gradual release activity for the dialectical journal – the teacher will explain dialectical journal in class and will slowly give students the full responsibility of the task after ample time to work with the teacher and in groups

### Reading to Understand Homework Project

Assignment Objective and Overview: Your goal for this assignment is to demonstrate your thorough knowledge of the text you will choose to read in class. Over the next several weeks you will have time in class to read your text, work with peers reading the same and different texts, practice analytical reading skills, and work on your final product. As you read the novel, you will have to complete a dialectical journal that demonstrates your understanding of the text by using textual evidence to support claims. Once you have finished reading the text, you will then create a children's book version of your text that further demonstrates your overall comprehension of the text, its messages, themes, characters, and overall story.

Children's Book Guidelines: Your children's book is just that: yours. You have the creative liberty to make the book as funny, illustrative, dark, poetic, dry, boring, exciting, or different as you want. If you read a novel set during the WWII era but you want your children's book to have animals as the main characters by channeling your inner George Orwell, the freedom is yours. If you want to make a silly, rhyming book of nonsense like Dr. Seuss, go for it. You simply have to follow these guidelines, and the rest is up to you...

1. This is a CHILDREN'S book. Therefore, your language choice needs to be taken into consideration. Aim for your book to be read and *understood* by children in elementary school or the ages of 6-10. HINT: Read some children's books on the side to get an idea of what you can produce.
2. Your book *must* summarize or represent the text you read in class. Your children's book cannot just be about anything. It must demonstrate your comprehension of the major storylines, themes, characters, and messages that were presented in the text you read in class. HINT: Think of your children's book as the simplified, quick version of your text.

3. Your children's book must have illustrations. Now I know that this may seem daunting for many of you; however, pictures can mean a thousand words. Give your pictures your best effort. Your book must have a minimum 2:1 ratio of pictures to pages. (i.e. If your book is 20 pages, you must have at least 10 pictures) HINT: Some things are easier to draw than others. Try drawing the night sky to help your reader see the setting instead of attempting to draw Chicago's entire city skyline. Again, look at children's books to get an idea of illustrations you can incorporate into your book.
4. Your children's book must have chapters. All of the texts you read have chapters; therefore your children's book must also have chapters. Chapters will help you to ensure your children's book is not missing any main points from your text and will serve as a guideline for how long your children's book will be.
5. Each chapter must be at least 2 pages. Again, this is a children's book. You are summarizing and demonstrating your comprehension of the text. HINT: Less is more.

Getting Started: Now it's time for you to get started. Please read the brief descriptions of the following text and choose one to be your text for the unit. *Please choose a book you have not read!* I have provided the Lexile Level for each text and the page numbers. Remember, even if a text has fewer page numbers, a higher Lexile Level means the text is more difficult to read. Once you have selected a text, you cannot switch. Be sure in your decision. Feel free to read a sample of the text before choosing.

1. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky – Lexile Level: 720L; 224 pages

This novel follows Charlie and his unique group of friends, and he tries to move past his traumatic history and move forward as a normal high schooler.

2. *Jerk, California* by Jonathan Friesen – Lexile Level: HL510L; 368 pages

This novel follows Sam as he tries to discover his family roots and come to terms with a disease that has challenged his youth, Tourette's Syndrome.

3. *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson – Lexile Level 690L; 224 pages

This novel follows Melinda's transition into high school after a traumatic summer event.

Friendless and an outcast, Melinda has to learn to heal on her own.

4. *Looking for Alaska* by John Green – Lexile Level 850L; 160 pages

This novel follows Miles "Pudge" Halter as he joins boarding school to gain a better perspective on life. After the death of a friend, he and his friends try to discover the truth.

If you want an extra challenge:

5. *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver – Lexile Level 860L; 496 pages

After a fatal car accident, Samantha is forced to re-live the last day of her life over and over until she finds a way to save herself.

6. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline – Lexile Level 970L; 400 pages

Set in a futuristic world where humans are addicted to virtual reality, high schooler Wade Watson embarks on a competition that could change his life forever.

While you read: As you read your novel you will participate in several in-class activities to help you understand the text and to utilize your analytical skills by finding textual evidence to support your claim. Over the next several weeks you will need to keep track of the different activities and hold onto different assignments to turn in at the conclusion of this unit. Most importantly, you will be completing a dialectical journal. Your dialectical journal will be checked on a weekly basis to monitor progress and keep you on track with your reading.

### Dialectical Journal Graphic Organizer

**Objective:** The purpose of this dialectical journal is to allow you to practice and demonstrate your ability to take textual evidence and support a claim. This exercise will not only allow you to build your textual based evidence skills, but it also helps you to comprehend the text you are reading.

**Guidelines:** Use the graphic organizer below to make a claim, identify quotes, and explain how those quotes support your claim. You will need to have at least two claims per chapter, and they will need to be claims regarding one of the following literary device categories: plot, character development, setting, author’s choice/style, or theme. You will need to have at least three claims for each category. HINT: Theme may not be identified until later in the book, however, it is *highly* suggested that once you discover the theme, you look back to trace the development of that theme.

<b>Claim Category (Choose 1):</b> Plot, Setting, Character Development, Author’s Choice/Style, Theme	<b>Claim:</b> This is your argument based on what you’ve read.	<b>Textual Evidence:</b> What <i>direct</i> quote in the book supports your claim? Cite using chapter # and page #.	<b>Explanation:</b> In this section, explain <i>how</i> your quote supports your claim.
<i>Ex. Character            Development</i>	<i>Ex. Jack is letting            the savage side of            human nature take            over within him.</i>	<i>Ex. “I cut the pig’s            throat. There was            lashings of blood”            (ch. 4, pg. 69)</i>	<i>Ex. This quote            demonstrates Jack’s            savagery because he            explains how he killed            the pig and seemed            excited about its death.</i>

**Children’s Book Rubric**

This rubric will be used as the grading guideline for your Children’s Book. Please read over it and become familiar with the different components so that you are able to reach your peak goals.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
Comprehension	Student demonstrates total comprehension of all themes, messages, and overall plot presented in the selected text.	Student mostly demonstrates comprehension of themes, messages, and overall plot presented in selected text with few errors.	Students demonstrates partial comprehension of themes, messages, and overall plot presented in selected text with some errors.	Student demonstrates little comprehension of themes, messages, and overall plot presented in selected text with many errors.
Relevance	Student presents a completely relevant children’s book that can clearly be seen as an	Students presents a mostly relevant children’s book that can mostly be seen as an interpreted summary of the selected text.	Student presents a children’s book that attempts to show relevance to the selected	Student presents a children’s book that does not seem relevant to the selected text and has many interpretive errors.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
	interpreted summary of the selected text.		text but has some interpretive errors.	
Creativity	Student created a unique children’s book that met the academic requirements and exceeded standard expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student created a unique children’s book that met the academic requirements and mostly reached expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student created a somewhat unique children’s book that met the academic requirement and attempted to reach expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student did not create a unique children’s book that met academic requirements. Student did not present work expected by a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.
Formatting	Student exceeded the minimum page and illustration requirement for their children’s book	Student met the minimum page and illustration requirement for their children’s book and had few grammatical errors.	Student nearly met the minimum page and illustration requirement for their children’s book	Student did not attempt to meet the minimum page and illustration requirement for and had

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
	and had no grammatical errors.		and had many grammatical errors.	many grammatical errors throughout.

### Lesson Plan for Dialectical Journal

**Time Needed:** 2 hours (or two class periods)

**ELA Standard:** *CA Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts – Literacy – RL.10.1* – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**ELD Standard:** *CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.B.6.a* – Explain ideas, phenomena, processes, and relationships within texts based on close reading of grade-appropriate texts, using increasingly detailed sentences, and an increasing variety of general academic and domain-specific words.

**ELA Objective:** After reading their selected novel, students will be able to make an analytical claim and support that claim with evidence drawn from the text.

**ELD Objective:** Students will be able to explain ideas from the text using complete sentences and appropriate words.

**Assessment:** Students will continually work on a dialectical journal where they will write their analyses, supporting evidence, and explanations. These journals will be checked for accuracy and meeting the objectives on a weekly basis.

**List of Materials:**

1. Students will need to have their copy of their novel in class.
2. The teacher will need to provide copies of dialectical journal graphic organizer.
3. Denby, David. (February 23, 2016). Do Teens Read Seriously Anymore? *The New Yorker Magazine*. Retrieved from [Link to Article from New Yorker Website](#)

4. The teacher should post the five literary device categories students will continually look for as they read their novel: Plot, Setting, Character Development, Author's Style/Choice, and Theme.

**Instructional Steps:**

1. Refresh & Remind – The teacher will draw the students' attention to the five literary devices on the board and will ask students to recall what they mean and ask students to provide examples. The teacher will write student responses on the board next to each term until all terms have been properly identified.
2. Focus Lesson – The teacher will then hand out the dialectical journal to all of the students. The teacher will go over the instructions and expectations thoroughly with the students and will answer any questions or concerns.
3. Guided Instruction – The teacher will hand out copies of the *Do Teens Read Seriously Anymore?* to the students and will place a copy on the Elmo to project for the class to see. The teacher will then have the students' popcorn read the article out loud. After the article is read, the teacher will then provide examples of what the students could put on the dialectical journal based on the article. For instance, the teacher could write in the claim section of the dialectical journal that the author uses pop culture references in his article as a style choice to bring in readers. The teacher would then write down the quote where pop culture references are used. Then the teacher will ask the students to explain that choice by asking why the author does this. After creating several examples from the article on the dialectical journal, the teacher will then transition into the next step of gradual release.

4. Collaborative Learning – The teacher will divide the students into groups based on their selected novel for the unit. Once the students are in their groups, the teacher will have them collaborate to fill out their dialectical journals. The students will work together on the first chapter of their shared book to create analyses, find supporting evidence, and explain their claim. As the students work together, the teacher will walk from group to group, assisting and answering questions. The goal for the students will be to finish entries in their dialectical journal for chapters one and two.
5. Independent Work – Once the students have reached their collaborative goals, the students will then be released to work on their own. The teacher will be sure to allow time in class for the students to work on chapters three and four, that way they have direct access to their peers and teacher. Should students not finish in class, they can complete their independent work at home.

### **Writing Homework Curriculum**

The following homework curriculum focuses on guiding students toward an advanced writing goal based on selected writing standards from the California Common Core Standard for English Language Arts and from the California English Language Development Standards. In this choice unit, students will choose a topic that interests them and will create their own theme or message based on that topic. Students will then produce various forms of writing that are made up of different genres, all of which will present the student's chosen theme. Throughout their writing, they will develop and build upon their skills of organizing and developing different forms of writing that cater to the desired task and audience. At the conclusion of the unit, students will have an opportunity to put their writing on display and view other multi-genre projects to further discover how different genres can present the same theme. The curriculum provided was developed for a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English class. However, the activities and homework tasks can be easily modified and incorporated into different grade levels and subjects. I highly recommend that due to the broad scope of this project, that educators provide examples of different genres to provide students with a variety of concrete ideas. The following homework curriculum includes a backward plan using the Understanding by Design Template, homework assignment sheets, graphic organizers, rubrics, and lesson plans directly related to assigning homework through the use of gradual release of responsibility.

## Understanding by Design

**Subject Area:** English

**Grade Level:** 10

**Unit/Title Focus:** Multi-genre Writing

**Estimated Amount of Instructional Time:** 6 weeks

### Stage 1 – Desired Results

State Content and Common Core Skill Standards:

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – W.10.4* – Produce clear and coherent writing in development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

*CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.C.12.a* – Use an increasing variety of grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific academic words accurately and appropriately when producing increasingly complex written and spoken texts.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand how different genres can relay the same message

### **Essential Questions:**

Why is writing an essential life skill?

How can one use multiple genres to their advantage when presenting a message?

### Big Idea(s)

Using a variety of writing strategies; Understanding different written genres

### **What students will know:**

Definition of genre, writer's purpose, and audience

### **What students will be able to do:**

Students will be able to use a variety of written genres to present a similar message

### Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

#### **Performance Tasks:**

Multi-genre project – this final assessment will allow students to demonstrate their ability to produce a variety of grade-appropriate texts that present a clear message.

#### **Other Evidence:**

Writing outlines – this task will allow students to organize their thoughts and ideas before writing their final genre.

Quick writes – these tasks will allow students to practice different styles of writing in a pressure-free environment

### Stage 3 – Learning Plan

In-class writing outlines – Students will complete an outline for each genre they wish to create.

The outline will be used to make sure the student is creating an accurate genre that presents their selected theme for their collective writing project. It will also allow them to brainstorm ideas for what their genre will include and what their genre will look like.

Quick writes – Quick writes will include a specific genre and theme and will be utilized to help students practice writing in different genres. It will also help students to see that the same message can be presented regardless of what genre is used.

Gradual release activity for the multi-genre project – The teacher will slowly guide students toward creating genres on their own by first focusing on developing different genres in class.

In-class homework – Students will have time in class to work on their multi-genre project to have easy access to teacher and peer help.

### **Multi-genre Project Assignment Sheet**

Assignment Objective and Overview: Your goal for this project is to demonstrate your ability to present the same theme or message throughout a variety of written genres. Over the next several weeks you will practice writing in different genres to develop your writing skills. For this project, you will choose a topic that you are passionate about, and you will develop your own theme or message about that topic. For example, if you are interested in ocean pollution, your theme or message might be “help keep the ocean clean,” or if you are interested in gender equality, your theme or message might be “equality for all.” Your message does not have to be elaborate. Typically, themes encompass one general topic or idea that the author is trying to present in their writing. Once you have chosen your theme, you will then have to produce a variety of genres that clearly present that theme and demonstrate your ability to write catering to specific tasks or audiences.

What is a multi-genre project? A multi-genre project is a writing project that allows students to choose what they create while they build necessary writing skills for their English class and beyond. Students will select a variety of genres to write and will put them all together in one written portfolio. Genres are the different types of ways a person can write, tell a story, or produce a piece of work. Different types of genre include fairytales, diary entries, letters, emails, poems, tweets, song lyrics, etc. For this project, genres have been divided into four different writing tasks that cater to different audiences:

1. Creative writing – Poems, short stories, graphic novels, comic strips, play scripts, etc.
2. Professional writing – Letters, emails, legal documents, news report, resume, etc.
3. Technology and writing – Top ten list, tweet, Instagram post, Snapchat article, etc.
4. Academic writing – essays, essay outlines, research paper, PowerPoint presentation, etc.

Project Guidelines: This project will give you a lot of freedom to choose what you want to produce; however, you must follow these guideline whiles creating your multi-genre project.

1. Theme – You will need to choose one theme that will be presented throughout your entire project. Make sure it is something you are passionate about and can have a *clear* message.
2. Genres – You will need to produce *at least* five genres for your project. You must complete at least one genre from each task (creative, professional, technological, and academic). You can choose any genre within each task, and the final genre is completely up to you.
3. Language – Within each genre, your word choice must be appropriate to the selected task. For example, if you are writing a professional letter, your language must be appropriate to a professional audience (no slang, proper grammar, etc.)
4. Project Layout – Your project must be formatted to match and include the following:
  - a. Cover Page – Must include a title of the project, relevant image/drawing, created by, date, period, teacher name
  - b. Table of contents – A list of what the reader will find in your project
  - c. Introductory letter – You are writing this letter to the reader. Explain your topic, why you chose that topic, and what the reader can expect to find in your project
  - d. Five genres – In the order of your choosing. To ensure you are building your writing skills as much as possible, for each genre, you must include a 150-word written explanation that explains why you chose that genre and how it relates to your theme.

**Multi-genre Project Planning Organizer**

**Objective:** As you begin to work on your multi-genre project it is important that you brainstorm ideas for *all* of your genres before working on them. Through brainstorming, you can ensure that all of your genres align and present the same theme or message.

**Guidelines:** Use the following organizer to help you brainstorm what genres you might want to include in your project. Be sure to fill out all sections of the organizer and be as specific as possible, that way when you are ready to outline and later write your genre, you already know what you want it to look like. Prior to starting your outlines, you must have this organizer completed and approved by the teacher. If you have areas that are not clear or genres that do not present the theme, it is better to have it corrected at this stage rather than a later stage in the project.

Multi-genre Planning Organizer	<b>Genre</b> (What type of genre will you create based on the writing task?)	<b>Plan it out</b> (What will your genre look like? Brainstorm your ideas.)	<b>Theme</b> (How will your theme be presented in this genre?)
<i>Example: Creative Task</i>	<i>Ex: Comic book strip</i>	<i>Ex: I will create a comic strip of fish in the sea trying on “clothes,” but really the clothes are trash. The strip will show how trash can be harmful, not funny</i>	<i>Ex: It will relate to the theme “keep oceans clean” because the language will be sarcastic to show the pollution is harmful to the creatures in the sea</i>
<b>Creative Task</b>			
<b>Professional Task</b>			

Multi-genre Planning Organizer	<b><u>Genre</u></b> (What type of genre will you create based on the writing task?)	<b><u>Plan it out</u></b> (What will your genre look like? Brainstorm your ideas.)	<b><u>Theme</u></b> (How will your theme be presented in this genre?)
<b>Technological Task</b>			
<b>Academic Task</b>			
<b>Student Choice</b>			

### Multi-genre Project Rubric

This rubric will be used as the grading guideline for your Multi-genre Project. Please read over it and become familiar with the different components so that you can reach your peak goals.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
Central Theme	Student was able to present their theme across all genres perfectly and their message was clear.	Student was able to present their theme across most genres, and their message was mostly clear.	Student attempted to present their theme across some genres, and their message was somewhat clear.	Student did not present their theme across the genres, and their message was not clear.
Genres	Student expertly created at least five genres, including one from all four writing tasks. Each genre was clear and had no errors.	Student created all five genres, including one from all four writing tasks. Each genre was clear and had few errors.	Student created less than five genres yet included one from all four writing tasks. Genres lacked clarity and had some errors.	Student created less than five genres and did not include one from all four writing tasks. Genres were confusing and had many errors.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
Creativity	Student created a unique multi-genre portfolio that met the academic requirements and exceeded standard expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student created a unique multi-genre portfolio that met the academic requirements and mostly reached expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student created a somewhat unique multi-genre portfolio that met the academic requirement and attempted to reach expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	Student did not create a unique multi-genre portfolio that met academic requirements and did not present work expected by a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.
Formatting 1. Cover page 2. Table of contents 3. Intro letter 4. Genres	Student perfectly followed the project layout and exceeded all requirements including the minimum word count requirement for each genre and had no grammatical errors.	Student mostly followed the project layout and met all requirements including the minimum word count requirement for each genre and had few grammatical errors.	Student somewhat followed the project layout and attempted to meet all requirements including the minimum word count for each genre	Student did not follow the project layout, including the minimum word count requirement for each genre and had many grammatical errors.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
5. Written explanations			and had some grammatical errors.	

### Lesson Plan for Multi-genre Project

**Time Needed:** 2-3 hours (2-3 class periods depending on how quickly your students understand genre and can begin working individually)

**ELA Standard:** *CA Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts – Literacy – W.10.4* – Produce clear and coherent writing in development, organization, and style that are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**ELD Standard:** *CA English Language Development Standards for Grade 9-10 – I.C.12.a* – Use an increasing variety of grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific academic words accurately and appropriately when producing increasingly complex written and spoken texts.

**ELA Objective:** Students will be able to organize and produce clear and coherent writing in a variety of genres that cater to different tasks and audiences.

**ELD Objective:** Students will be able to include a variety of grade-appropriate and domain-specific words in their writing based on the genre task and audience.

**Assessment:** Students will complete the multi-genre planning organizer and genre outlines. The teacher will check that students understand the task and are approaching the objectives. Students will later complete the multi-genre project which will demonstrate their development in writing and advancement toward goals.

**List of Materials:**

1. Types of genres (with written on the board, on a PowerPoint Slide, etc.)
2. Copies of Multi-genre Project Assignment Sheet
3. Copies of Multi-genre Project Planning Organizer
4. Elmo or way of projecting teacher writing on screen for students to see

**Instructional Steps:**

1. Refresh and Remind – The teacher will have the journal topic “What is genre?” written on the board or presented in a PowerPoint. The teacher will give the students approximately five minutes to define genre in their own words in their journal. The teacher will then ask students to share some of their responses. The teacher will confirm and clarify what the definition of genre is to the students. The teacher will then ask the students to present examples of genre, and the teacher will write them all on the board. If students need help, the teacher will provide some examples. Once the students have a grasp as to what genres can be or look like, the teacher will then have students add to their journal by answering “what is the purpose of genres?” Again, the teacher will ask students to share and will lead a brief discussion.
2. Focus Lesson – The teacher will then inform the students that they will be creating many genres on their own and those genres will make up their multi-genre project. The teacher will hand out the multi-genre project assignment sheet and will go over the instructions step by step with the students, answering any questions as they go along. Once the students are clear on the project expectations, the teacher will then provide several examples for the students.
3. Guided Instruction – The teacher will then create an example *with* the students. The teacher will randomly ask a student to provide a theme for their genre. Once a theme is given the teacher will ask a different student for a genre. Then, in a popcorn style format, the teacher will write the genre under an Elmo (so students can see) as they take suggestions from students. In this way, the students are interacting with the teacher as the teacher provides an in-class example of the genre writing they will be completing.

4. Collaborative Learning – The teacher will then guide an activity in which students create genres with their peers. The teacher will ask the students to get into groups of three. Once students are in their groups, the teacher will then tell the students that the three of them will be creating a practice genre. The teacher will provide a theme and genre and will allow the student ten minutes to complete the task. (The teacher will begin with this activity at the start of each lesson to have the students become familiar with different forms of writing and how to incorporate the theme. The teacher can have students do these quick writes in pairs, groups, or individually.) The teacher will monitor student progress by checking in with groups and making sure their writing is meeting both the theme and genre requirement. The teacher will again ask students to share to provide students with a variety of examples.
5. Independent Work – Now that the students are comfortable with writing in different genres and know how to incorporate the theme, the teacher will hand out and explain the multi-genre project planning organizer. Students will have time in class to complete this homework task before having to complete it on their own at home. The teacher will remind the students that they cannot move on to the next phase of their project without first completing the organizer and having it looked over and approved by the teacher.

### Genre Examples to Post for Students

Poems	Snapchat	Haiku	Horoscope
Comic strips	Email	Legal documents	Letters
Wanted posters	Billboard	Eulogy	Classified ad
Crime report	Top 10 list	Crossword puzzle	Fairytale
Prescription label	Pie graph	Job application	Prayer
Recipe	Science journal	Horror story	Social media post
Journal entry	Essays	Breaking news report	Fiction books
Dialogue	Book reports	Amber alert	Nonfiction books
Tweet	Text Messages	Resume	AND MANY MORE

### **Listening Homework Curriculum**

The following homework curriculum focuses on guiding students toward an advanced listening goal based on selected listening standards from the CA Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and from the CA English Language Development Standards. In this choice unit, students will be allowed to choose an adult to interview based on a political hot topic of their choice. Students will develop their question probing skills to gain more information from a speaker and will also develop skills in evaluating a speaker's point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric. Students will present their advanced listening skills in a feature article that will discuss their speaker and their speaker's thoughts and opinions. The curriculum provided includes two specific lessons that will first help students to build and prepare questions to propel conversation in an interview and secondly allow students to practice conducting interviews in a safe, classroom environment. Though students will also have the opportunity to build speaking skills, the focus of this unit is the students' ability to take what they hear in their interview and translate the knowledge into a comprehensive text using their evaluating skills to represent their speaker's thoughts, opinions, and experiences. The following homework curriculum includes a backward plan using the Understanding by Design Template, homework assignment sheets, graphic organizers, rubrics, and lesson plans directly related to assigning homework through the use of gradual release of responsibility.

## Understanding by Design

**Subject Area:** English

**Grade Level:** 10

**Unit/Title Focus:** Listening to Others

**Estimated Amount of Instructional Time:** 6 weeks

### Stage 1 – Desired Results

State Content and Common Core Skill Standards:

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.1.c – Propel conversations by posing questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.*

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.3 – Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.*

*CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.B.5 – Demonstrate comprehension of oral presentations and discussions on a variety of social and academic topics by asking and answering questions that show thoughtful consideration of the ideas.*

### **Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand how to create and pose questions during conversations

Students will understand how listening can help you to gain different perspectives

### **Essential Questions:**

Why is listening an essential life skill? How can one better understand a text?

How can text be interpreted?

### Big Idea(s)

Using conversations with others to gain perspective and knowledge

**What students will know:**

Webb's (1997) Depth of Knowledge theory and using its levels to create better questions

Definition of rhetoric, including ethos, pathos, and logos

**What students will be able to do:**

Students will be able to use questions to enhance conversations with others

Students will be able to gain perspective and knowledge from others opinions/experiences

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence**Performance Tasks:**

Feature Article – This assessment will allow students to evaluate a speaker of their choice and will allow them to present their ability to pose questions from their interview with the speaker in one cohesive document.

**Other Evidence:**

Interview question building – Students will demonstrate their ability to create questions using the DOK levels

Interview notes – Students will use assigned notes sheets to take notes and demonstrate their thorough listening while holding an interview

Feature article outline – Students will create an outline for their article before writing it out to practice evaluating their speaker's point of view

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Importance of perspective – Students will learn about perspective and the importance of understanding that all matters are two-sided. The most knowledge is gained from understanding both sides.

Depth of Knowledge questions – Students will become familiar with Webb’s (1997) Depth of Knowledge research and will learn to create questions modeled off of his Depth of Knowledge levels, starting with the lowest and building to the highest.

In-class practice interviews – Once students have created several questions using the Depth of Knowledge levels, they will practice using those questions on peers in class. This will also help them prepare for the interview they will do for their final project.

### Feature Article Interview Assignment

Assignment Objective and Overview: The objective of this assignment is to allow you to demonstrate your listening skills. You will be given the opportunity to interview a person of your choice, and you will utilize your questions skills and evaluating skills to gain perspective and knowledge from your interviewee. After your interview, you will discuss your evaluation and interview in a feature article that will be typed and turned in as your final project.

What is a feature article? Have you ever walked by a checkout stand at the store and saw Kim Kardashian or Justin Bieber on the front of a magazine and then you stopped to read the article about them? That is a feature article, the main focus article that a magazine presents. Typically, these articles focus on a major event, place, or person. The article you create will focus on whomever you choose to interview as the featured person of the month.

Assignment Guidelines: Though you have the freedom to choose who you want to interview, it is important you read these guidelines first and then follow the steps and procedures for this assignment carefully.

1. Topic Focus – Your interview must have a purpose. Thus, you are going to choose a *current* political topic of your choice (i.e. immigration, gender equality, minimum wage, etc.) and you are going to interview an *adult* (over the age of 25) on that topic. Consider interviewing someone who is far left or far right on the topic, and then your interview will focus on their perspective. Remember, you are writing a feature article on this person, so the stronger their opinion, the stronger your article.
2. Listening Skills – You are writing this article solely based on the answers your speaker gives. You are simply taking in what they say and evaluating their perspective and putting it in a cohesive and clear article. Remember, you will need to evaluate their point

of view, their reasoning, and their rhetoric (logic based, emotion-based, credibility based). It is not your job to twist or change their words. For this reason, you will need to include a completed, typed transcript of your interview.

3. Interview Questions – The information you will receive from your interview will be solely based on the questions you ask. You will need to have a set list of question to ask during the interview, and you are more than welcome to improvise. Remember, your questions need to propel the conversation by clarifying, verifying, or challenging the responses. Questions also need to be relevant and should tie to the main ideas. You will need to include at least three directly quoted questions and responses from your interview into your article.
4. Article formatting – Your article will need to be submitted in proper MLA format and must meet the minimum word count of 800 words (about two pages double-spaced).

Steps and Procedures: Please follow these steps and check them off as you complete them to ensure you are meeting all of the requirements for this assignment.

1. Pick a current political topic that you are interested in hearing someone's opinion on.  
(Write the topic choice here) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Pick an *adult* (over the age of 25) to interview. Please identify the following about the person and write it down.
  - a. Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How you know them: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Person's political party or opinion in regard to the political topic you chose:  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Schedule a time to interview this person and write it down here: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Create question for the interview and complete the DOK Interview question sheet.
5. Interview! – Record the interview (with permission), so you can go back and listen to the responses as you type the transcript and later produce your article. TAKE NOTES!
6. Create an outline for your article and get it approved by the teacher. Be sure to include key points and the three quoted questions and responses.
7. Draft your article. You will need a draft of your article and will participate in a formal in-class peer review.
8. Finalize your article!

### Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Interview Questions

Objective: The purpose of this chart is for you to create and lay out all of the questions you want to ask your speaker. The chart is designed for you to create questions at each of the first three levels of Webb’s (1997) Depth of Knowledge. Remember, your questions need to help clarify, verify, and enhance your interview.

Guidelines: Please fill out the chart below. This chart is designed for you to not only write down the questions for your interview but also provides space for you to take note during your interview. You will need to create at least five questions per DOK level and then five additional questions from a level of your choosing. If you want to ask more questions, that is fine.

Remember, the more questions you ask, the more information you have for your feature article.

Before asking your DOK questions, please ask the following introductory questions at the *start* of your interview.

1. What is your name?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. What are your initial or immediate thoughts on *(a political topic of your choice)*?

DOK Level	Question	Notes:
Ex. DOK #2	Ex. What do you notice about the public’s response to ocean pollution today?	Ex. You can write the speaker’s response here, your initial reactions, a follow-up question, etc.
DOK #1		
DOK #1		

DOK Level	Question	Notes:
DOK #1		
DOK #1		
DOK #1		
DOK #2		
DOK #3		
DOK #3		
DOK #3		

DOK Level	Question	Notes:
DOK #3		
DOK #3		
DOK # ____		

**Feature Article Rubric**

This rubric will be used as the grading guideline for your Feature Article Assignment. Please read over it and become familiar with the different components so that you can reach your peak goals.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
Topic Focus	Student was able to narrow their article to present one topic perfectly and it was very clearly presented.	Student was able to narrow their article to present one topic mostly and it was clearly presented.	Student was able to narrow their article somewhat to present one topic & it lacked complete clarity.	Student did not narrow their article to one topic, and the presentation was unclear.
Listening Skills	Student expertly evaluates the speaker’s point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric and does not misinterpret or change the speaker’s responses.	Student mostly evaluates the speaker’s point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric and does not misinterpret or change the speaker’s responses.	Student somewhat evaluates the speaker’s point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric and partially misinterprets or	Student does not evaluate the speaker’s point of view, reasoning, evidence, and rhetoric and misinterprets and/or

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
			changes the speaker’s responses.	changes the speaker’s responses.
Interview Questions	Student posed interview questions that perfectly propelled the conversation by verifying, clarifying, and challenged the speaker’s responses. All questions were relevant to the main topic.	Student posed interview questions that mostly propelled the conversation by verifying, clarifying, and/or challenged the speaker’s responses. Most questions were relevant to the main topic.	Student posed interview questions that somewhat propelled the conversation by verifying, clarifying, or challenged the speaker’s responses. Some questions were relevant to the main topic.	Student did not pose interview questions that propelled the conversation by verifying, clarifying, or challenged the speaker’s responses. Many questions were relevant to the main topic.
Formatting	Student exceeded the minimum word count requirement, produced a perfectly MLA formatted	Student met the minimum word count requirement, had mostly proper MLA formatting, had few	Student did not meet the minimum word count requirement, had some MLA formatting and some	Student did not meet the minimum word count requirement, did not use MLA formatting and had

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
	article, had no grammatical errors, and exceeded the expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	grammatical errors, and met the expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	grammatical errors, and attempted to reach the expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	many grammatical errors, and did not meet the expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.

### Lesson Plan for Creating Interview Questions

**Time Needed:** 1 hour (1 class period)

**ELA Standard:** *CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.1.c*  
– Propel conversations by posing questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**ELD Standard:** *CA English Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.B.5* – Demonstrate comprehension of oral presentations and discussion on a variety of social and academic topics by asking and answering questions that show thoughtful consideration of the ideas.

**ELA Objective:** Students will be able to create a variety of questions that are meant to clarify, verify, and challenge that they will use in their interview.

**ELD Objective:** Students will be able to anticipate what their speaker will say in the interview to create a variety of questions to respond with during the interview.

**Assessment:** Students will complete their DOK Interview Question sheet, so it is ready for their interview. The teacher will check these questions for accuracy before student interviews.

**List of Materials:**

1. DOK levels and questions frames
2. Copies of the DOK Interview Question sheet

**Instructional Steps:**

1. Introduce – The teacher will have the journal topic “what makes a good question?” on the board and will allow the students five minutes to write a response. The teacher will then have students share out their responses to lead a brief class discussion. The teacher will then introduce Webb’s (1997) Depth of Knowledge theory and will elaborate on the different levels of knowledge.

2. Focus Lesson – The teacher will then hand out copies of a DOK Questions Stems chart to all of the students. The teacher will ask the students to look over the questions and have them discuss in their groups what the differences are between the questions in each level. After discussion, the teacher will then explain to the students that for their interview they will need to ask their speaker questions at the first three levels.
3. Guided Instruction – The teacher will then hand out the DOK Interview Questions sheet to each student and will explain the graphic organizer to them in detail. The teacher will answer any questions asked if necessary. Then the teacher will demonstrate how to create some sample questions for the students. The teacher will ask the students to pick a sample topic that the interview will be about. Then the teacher will model how to create a question in level one, two, and three. Once the teacher has modeled at least one question in each level, they will move on.
4. Collaborative Learning – The teacher will then have students get into groups of three or four students. Once students are in groups, the teacher will have students work together to create at least one question in each level for all the students in the group (about nine-twelve questions total). This way students can practice making questions for their topic and have extra practice making questions for other topics. The teacher will monitor the room and ensure that students are creating accurate questions. After the groups have created the minimum amount of questions, they can keep working until all groups have finished. Once all groups are done the teacher will ask groups to share out questions so that students can hear as many question possibilities as possible before working on their own.

5. Independent Work – The teacher will then direct the students to work on their own to create the rest of their questions. Students will have ample time to work individually in class and whatever they do not complete will need to be completed at home. The teacher will remind the students that their questions need to be checked and approved by the teacher before they can conduct their interview.

<b>DOK Question Stems</b>	
<p><b><u>DOK 1</u></b></p> <p>Can you recall ____?</p> <p>When did ____ happen?</p> <p>Who was ____?</p> <p>How can you recognize ____?</p> <p>What is ____?</p> <p>How can you find the meaning of ____?</p> <p>Can you recall ____?</p> <p>Can you select ____?</p> <p>How would you write ____?</p> <p>What might you include on a list about ____?</p> <p>Who discovered ____?</p> <p>What is the formula for ____?</p> <p>Can you identify ____?</p> <p>How would you describe ____?</p>	<p><b><u>DOK 3</u></b></p> <p>Can you explain how ____ affected ____?</p> <p>How would you compare ____?</p> <p>Contrast ____?</p> <p>How would you classify ____?</p> <p>How are ____ alike? Different?</p> <p>How would you classify the type of ____?</p> <p>What can you say about ____?</p> <p>How would you summarize ____?</p> <p>How would you summarize ____?</p> <p>What steps are needed to edit ____?</p> <p>When would you use an outline to ____?</p> <p>How could you organize ____?</p> <p>What would you use to classify ____?</p> <p>What do you notice about ____?</p>
<p><b><u>DOK 2</u></b></p> <p>How is ____ related to ____?</p> <p>What conclusions can you draw ____?</p> <p>How would you adapt ____ to create a different ____?</p> <p>How would you test ____?</p> <p>Can you predict the outcome if ____?</p> <p>What is the best answer? Why?</p> <p>What conclusion can be drawn from these three texts?</p> <p>What is your interpretation of this text? Support your rationale.</p> <p>How would you describe the sequence of ____?</p> <p>What facts would you select to support ____?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason ____?</p> <p>What would happen if ____?</p> <p>How would you test ____?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason ____?</p>	<p><b><u>DOK 4</u></b></p> <p>Write a thesis, drawing conclusions from multiple sources.</p> <p>Design and conduct an experiment.</p> <p>Gather information to develop alternative explanations for the results of an experiment.</p> <p>Write a research paper on a topic.</p> <p>Apply information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.</p> <p>What information can you gather to support your idea about ____?</p> <p>DOK 4 would most likely be the writing of a research paper or applying information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.</p> <p>DOK 4 requires time for extended thinking.</p>

### Lesson Plan for Interviewing a Speaker

**Time Needed:** 2 hours (2 class periods)

**ELA Standard:** *CA Common Core Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.1.c –*

Propel conversations by posing questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**ELD Standard:** *CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.B.5 –*

Demonstrate comprehension of oral presentations and discussions on a variety of social and academic topics by asking and answering questions that show thoughtful consideration of the ideas.

**ELA Objective:** Students will be able to propel conversations with questions during practice interviews.

**ELD Objective:** Students will be able to demonstrate comprehension of the speaker’s responses by asking questions that demonstrate consideration of their ideas.

**Assessment:** Students will peer review and self-access each other to determine areas of improvement and areas of success.

**List of Materials:**

1. Patrick, L. (Director). (January 22, 2018). Black Panther’s Star Chadwick Boseman on Feeling Like Mayor, *Ellen Show*. Retrieved from [Link to YouTube Video from Ellen Show interview](#)
2. Copies of self-assessment and peer-assessment interview sheets

**Instructional Steps:**

1. Refresh and Remind – The teacher will have the journal topic “how do you lead a good interview?” on the board. The teacher will allow the students about five minutes to

answer the journal topic. The teacher will then ask students to share out their responses and will write the examples on the board for the class to see and refer to. The teacher will then ask the students to take out their DOK Question Stems and will remind them that using questions from the different levels of the DOK will help to make interviews more engaging.

2. Focus Lesson – The teacher will then inform the students that they will learn how to conduct an interview and will have time to perform practice interviews before conducting their main interview for the Feature Article assignment. The teacher will then tell the students that they will be watching a short interview from the Ellen DeGeneres show to see what tools or techniques a professional used to conduct an interview. The teacher will ask students to watch the interview carefully and listen to what questions Ellen ask or how she propels the conversation. The teacher will then play the YouTube interview with DeGeneres and Boseman. After the clip, the teacher will ask the students to share out what made the interview good. If a student shares something that is already written on the board from the journal topic, the teacher will circle it for emphasis. If it is not on the board, the teacher will add it to the board. The teacher will emphasize that interviews go well when the interviewer can listen to the speaker and can ask questions that add on to the current discussion.
3. Guided Instruction – The teacher will then allow the students to interview them on a topic to the teacher’s choice. For example, I will have the students interview me on traveling. The teacher will have students take turns asking questions to help them practice listening in order to propel the conversation. To prevent just a handful of students take over the large group interview, it helps to establish an order in which all the students must ask a

question. For example, if our students are in rows, you can have them go up and down the rows asking questions until each student has had an opportunity to practice. During this activity, if students are struggling to propel the conversation or develop a question, the teacher will provide examples.

4. Collaborative Learning – The teacher will then randomly divide the students into pairs, informing them that they will now have the opportunity to conduct a practice 1:1 interview before completing their main interview for the Feature Article assignment. Once the students are in pairs, the teacher will inform the students that each student will have the opportunity to be the interviewer and will ask the student to pick whoever will go first and then second. The teacher will let the students know that they will each have to conduct a 15-minute interview and therefore will need to use their question probing skill to keep the conversation going for the whole time. The teacher will also inform the students that after both interviews, they will have an opportunity to self-assess themselves and assess their partner. During the interviews the teacher will monitor the room to be sure the students are both on task and are successfully conducting an interview, intervening when necessary to provide support and suggestions.
5. Independent Work – After the assessments are complete the teacher will ask students to share out their positive or negative experiences. The teacher will lead a brief discussion, addressing any concerns and providing feedback. The teacher will then let the students know that they can continue to conduct extra practice interviews in class or if they are ready, they can prepare for their main interview that they will complete on their own.

**Practice Interview Self-Assessment**

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Speaker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Did I know my speaker's name and pronounce it correctly throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 2. Did I thoroughly and respectfully listen to my speaker at all times? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 3. Was I able to respond to the speaker with questions that verified? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 4. Was I able to respond to the speaker with questions that clarified? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 5. Was I able to respond to the speaker with questions the challenged? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 6. Was I able to propel the conversation so there were no moments of silence? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 7. Was I able to improvise and ask questions to gain more information? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 8. Was I able to allow the speaker to speak and not interrupt them? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 9. Was I respectful to my speaker and their thoughts and opinions? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 10. Did I ask questions that were relevant to the topic throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 11. Did I keep my opinions to myself so the focus to remain on the speaker? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 12. Did I demonstrate to the speaker that I was interested throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 13. Did I remain professional throughout the entirety of the interview? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 14. Overall, did I conduct a thorough and professional interview? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

15. Based on your responses and your interview, in what ways were you successful and will continue to do in future interviews?

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16. Based on your responses and your interview, in what ways did you struggle and need to improve upon in future interviews?

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**Practice Interview Peer-Assessment**

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Speaker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Did the interviewer know the speaker's name and pronounce it correctly throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 2. Did the interviewer thoroughly and respectfully listen to the speaker at all times? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 3. Was the interviewer able to respond to the speaker with questions that verified? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 4. Was the interviewer able to respond to the speaker with questions that clarified? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 5. Was the interviewer able to respond to the speaker with questions the challenged? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 6. Was the interviewer able to propel the conversation so there were no moments of silence? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 7. Was the interviewer able to improvise and ask questions to gain more information? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 8. Was the interviewer able to allow the speaker to speak and not interrupt them? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 9. Was the interviewer respectful to the speaker and their thoughts and opinions? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 10. Did the interviewer ask questions that were relevant to the topic throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 11. Did the interviewer keep their opinions to themselves to focus on the speaker? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 12. Did the interviewer demonstrate to the speaker that they were interested throughout? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 13. Did the interviewer remain professional throughout the interview? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 14. Overall, did the interviewer conduct a thorough and professional interview? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 15. Based on your responses and the interview, in what ways was the interviewer successful and should continue to do in future interviews?

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- 16. Based on your responses and the interview, in what ways did the interviewer struggle and needs to improve upon in future interviews?

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### **Speaking Homework Curriculum**

The following homework curriculum focuses on guiding students toward an advanced speaking goal based on selected speaking standards from the CA Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and from the CA English Language Development Standards. In this choice unit, students will give an oral presentation in class on a college of their choice. After rigorous research on the college and various activity to become more comfortable speaking in class, students will present the research on their college persuasively with the goal of making their school seem like the best choice for college. Students will develop their ability to speak clearly, concisely, and logically using the appropriate register. Students will have several opportunities in class to practice public speaking and will also self-assess and be peer-assessed on their speaking skills. Additionally, since this oral report is based on research, consider taking your students to the school library for a lesson on accurate research or perform a similar lesson on your own. The following homework curriculum includes a backward plan using the Understanding by Design Template, homework assignment sheets, graphic organizers, rubrics, and lesson plans directly related to assigning homework through the use of gradual release of responsibility.

## Understanding by Design

**Subject Area:** English

**Grade Level:** 10

**Unit/Title Focus:** Public Speaking

**Estimated Amount of Instructional Time:** 6 weeks

### Stage 1 – Desired Results

#### **State Content and Common Core Skill Standards:**

*CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.4 – Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organizations, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.*

*CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.C.9 – Plan and deliver a variety of oral presentations and reports on grade-appropriate topics that present evidence and facts to support ideas by using growing understanding of register.*

#### **Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand the importance of communication with others.

Students will understand how to become strong public speakers.

#### **Essential Questions:**

Why is communication an essential life skill? What does it take to be a good public speaker?

#### Big Idea(s)

Using public speaking as a practice for good speaking

#### **What students will know:**

Definition of pronunciation, register, and volume

**What students will be able to do:**

Students will be able to use public speaking strategies to become stronger communicators

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence**Performance Tasks:**

College Presentation – Students will demonstrate their skills to present evidence, finding, and information on a clear and concise presentation on the college of their choice

**Other Evidence:**

Research journal – Students will keep a research “journal” with all the information necessary they will need for their college presentation

Mini-presentations – Students will present small-scale, low-risk environment presentations to prepare them for their final presentation

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

In-class research and preparation – Students will have ample time in class to perform research on their college of choice. They will document their research in the research journal and will be responsible for keeping track of all citations for a proper reference page.

“Practice” speaking activities and icebreakers – Students will participate in several icebreakers that will allow them to practice enunciation, volume, and clarity. Students will also have opportunities to perform sample speeches to become comfortable speaking in front of the class.

In-class preparation – Students will have time in class to prepare their speech and visual aid with help from the teacher and peers.

Self-Assessment and Peer-Evaluations – Students will complete self-assessments on their presentation to determine areas of success and areas that need improvement. Additionally, during the presentation students will receive peer feedback. At the end of each presentation, students

will give a rating on the likelihood of them attending that college solely based on the presentation they just watched. Peer-assessments will be given via Google forms to keep anonymity and to allow the teacher to pre-screen the evaluations before releasing them to the individual student.

### **College Research Presentation - Which college is the best college?**

**Assignment Objective and Overview:** The objective for this project is to build public speaking skills to gain confidence and skills necessary to communicate outside of high school. For this presentation, you will be researching a college of your choice. You will be asked to know detailed information on the school including the location of the school, cost of attendance, activities offered, how alumni feel about the college and more. Once you have thoroughly researched the college, you will create a research-based presentation with the intended purpose of convincing audience members (your classmates) that your college is the best college. You will use your research, personal opinion, and the powers of persuasion to convince your reader that you have *the* number one college. Over the next several weeks you will be researching your school and will start building your argument. Your presentation will be a formal oral presentation with a visual aid.

**Requirements for presentation:** The purpose of your presentation is to present your findings and attempt to persuade an audience. Please use the following checklist to ensure you have met all of the requirements.

1. Professional PowerPoint or similar presentation (Ie Prezi, Peardeck, etc.)
2. 5-7-minute **prepared** oral presentation
3. Must have a clear organization and must include facts and research about the school
4. Use of academic language and appropriate register
5. Must dress professionally
6. One-page hand-out for the audience
7. Properly formatted works cited page

## College Research Paper – Research Journal

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Information Notes</i>
<b>Location</b> - City, State - Distance from home	
<b>Size</b> - Enrollment - Campus	
<b>Environment</b> - Type of school - School Setting (Urban/rural) - Location and size of nearest city - Co-Ed, male, female - Religious affiliation - Commuter school	
<b>Admission Requirements</b> - Deadline - Tests required - Average test scores, GPA, rank	
<b>Academics</b> - Majors offered - Special requirements - Accreditation - Student-faculty ratio - Typical class size	
<b>College Expenses</b> - Tuition, room, and board - Estimated total budget - Application fee, deposits	

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Information Notes</i>
<p><b>Financial Aid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deadlines</li> <li>- Required Forms</li> <li>- Percentage of students receiving aid</li> <li>- Scholarship opportunities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residence hall requirements</li> <li>- Food plans</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic</li> <li>- Recreational</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clubs, organizations</li> <li>- Greek life</li> <li>- Athletics, intramurals</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Campus Visits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When, how often</li> <li>- Special events</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Alumni</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do they feel about the school</li> <li>- Well-liked, not liked</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>-</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	

**College Research Presentation Rubric**

This rubric will be used as the grading guideline for your College Research Presentation. Please read over it and become familiar with the different components so that you can reach your peak goals.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
Delivery	Student perfectly presented information and findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner using appropriate language.	Student mostly presented information and findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner using mostly appropriate language.	Student somewhat presented information and findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner using somewhat appropriate language.	Student did not present information and findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner and did not use appropriate language.
Content	Student expertly provided a variety of information on their selected college that left the audience feeling	Student mostly provided a variety of information on their selected college that left the audience feeling more knowledgeable.	Student provided a small variety of information on their selected college that left the audience feeling a	Student did not present a variety of information on their selected college and failed to give the audience appropriate knowledge.

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
	much more knowledgeable.		lack of complete knowledge.	
Evidence	Student successfully utilized a variety of evidence in their presentation that supported their claim that their college was the best college.	Student mostly utilized a variety of evidence in their presentation that mostly supported their claim that their college was the best college.	Student somewhat utilized any evidence in their presentation that attempted to support their claim that their college was the best college.	Student did not incorporate evidence into their presentation and did not attempt to support their claims that their college was the best college.
Visual Aids	Student provided a perfectly detailed and creative visual presentation and handout that were easy to follow	Student provided a mostly detailed and creative visual presentation and handout that were mostly easy to follow and	Student provided a somewhat detailed and/or creative visual presentation and handout that were not easy to	Student did not provide a detailed and creative visual presentation and/or handout that were easy to follow and/or

	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Approaches Expectations	1 – Does Not Meet/ Approach Expectations
	and comprehend. Student exceeded expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	comprehend. Student met expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	follow. Student attempted to meet expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.	comprehend. Student did not meet expectations of a 10 <sup>th</sup> grade English student.

### Lesson Plan for Building Presentation Skills

**Time Needed:** 2 hours (2 class periods; should be after students have already conducted their research and are ready to build their speeches)

**ELA Standard:** *CA Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts – Literacy – SL.4 – Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organizations, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.*

**ELD Standard:** *CA English Language Development Standards for Grades 9-10 – I.C.9 – Plan and deliver a variety of oral presentations and reports on grade-appropriate topics that present evidence and facts to support ideas by using growing understanding of register.*

**ELA Objective:** Students will be able to present information, finding, and evidence in public presentations that are clear, concise, and logical.

**ELD Objective:** Students will be able to deliver an oral presentation using appropriate topics and register.

**Assessment:** Students will practice parts of their speech with peers and will self-assess themselves and be peer-assessed.

**List of Materials:**

1. Cho, Michael. (October 2013). The Science of Stage Fright (and how to overcome it).  
Retrieved from [Link to Michael Cho Ted Talk Video](#)
2. Washington, Megan. (April 2014). Why I Live in Mortal Dread of Public Speaking.  
Retrieved from [Link to Megan Washington Ted Talk Video](#)
3. Copies of self-assessment sheets and peer-assessment sheets
4. Flashcards (for students who do not have their own)

**Instructional Steps:**

1. Refresh and Remind – The teacher will play Mikael Cho’s TedEd on stage fright for the students. Once the video is over, the teacher will ask the students to reflect on the video by writing how they did or did not relate to what was mentioned in the video and what ideas presented stood out. The teacher will give the students about five minutes to reflect on the video and will then ask students to share, leading a brief discussion. If it is not discussed, the teacher should emphasize the line from the video “at a podium; you feel stage fright. But at some point, we’ve all had to communicate in front of other people, so you have to try and overcome it.” Remind the students that the goal for this project is to build public speaking skills to become a better communicator which is a key like skill.
2. Focus Lesson – The teacher will then begin a discussion with students on what traits and behaviors will make a good speech and what traits and behaviors will not. The teacher will emphasize the importance of eye contact, engaging with the audience, annunciation, etc. The teacher will then show Megan Washington’s Ted Talk on stage fright and will ask students to write down things they think she does well as a public speaker and areas where she can improve. After the video the teacher will ask students to share what they wrote, again leading a brief discussion. The teacher will emphasize that Megan had her speech written on her phone and that despite having it there to help her, she was not constantly staring at it. Rather she would quickly glance down and then look right back up at the audience, which is something students fail to do when they have flashcards or a Visual Presentation.
3. Guided Instruction – Once the students have had plenty examples of positive and negative speaking traits, the teacher will have the students take out their college research

journals and will have them begin writing and preparing their speeches. The teacher will walk from group to group making sure students are on the right track to meeting class objectives. The teacher will inform the students that once they have about a two-minute portion of their speech prepared that they will have an opportunity to share with peers before completing their speech.

4. Collaborative Learning – Once most students have about a two-minute portion of their speech planned out, the teacher will have the students get into groups of two to three students. The teacher will then have students share their portion of their speeches to their group members. Students who are sharing will need to be standing and treat this practice as if it were the real public speech that would be delivered in front of the whole class. This way the peers can determine if the student has nervous ticks, poor posture, etc. Once all students have shared, the teacher will hand out the self-assessment and peer-assessment forms. Students will complete the forms to see what areas they need to improve on and where they did well. This way students have immediate feedback while preparing their speech, so they only have a portion to correct or modify rather than their entire speech.
5. Independent Work – The teacher will then have the students continue working on their speeches and visual presentations. The teacher will monitor the room providing suggestions or answering questions when necessary.

<b>Positive Presentation Habits Examples</b>	<b>Negative Presentation Habits Examples</b>
Annunciating words	Slurring or mumbling
Strong voice and volume	Quiet voice and low volume
Eye contact with the audience	Lack of eye contact – constantly looking
Visual aids that are concise and do not overwhelm or distract the audience	down at flashcards or looking back at visual aids
Straight posture	Clutter visual aids that distract the audience
Confidence and professionalism	Poor posture
Appropriate language choices	Lack of confidence or knowledge
Relevant information and evidence	Poor language choices
Clearly prepared and practiced speech	Use of non-relevant information or evidence

**Public Speaking Self and Peer-Assessment**

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Please rate the presenter on the following (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest):

<b>Presentation/Delivery Format</b>	<b>Rating (1-5)</b>	<b>Please explain why you gave this rating</b>
Eye Contact – Did the speaker make eye contact with the audience?		
Voice – Did the speaker use a strong, loud voice that was clear to hear?		
Pace – Did the speaker speak at a level pace that was not too fast or too slow?		
Language – Did the speaker use appropriate academic language and explain potential unknown terms?		
Professionalism – Did the speaker obtain a level of professionalism and confidence throughout?		
Organization – Did the speaker's presentation seem well organized and easy to follow?		
Quality of Content – Did the speaker provide a variety of appropriate content?		
Transitions – Did the speaker use smooth transitions from topic to topic?		
Visual Aids – Did the speaker provide clear and concise aids that were only used to provide substance to the presentation? Did the speaker avoid staring at the aids and kept eye contact with the audience?		
Overall – Overall, how did the speaker perform and what areas did they succeed in or need improvement?		

## Chapter Five: Project Recommendations

Developing assessments for students is not an easy task. Developing assessments that students are interested in and want to complete is even harder. As a new teacher, I cling to any strategies and ideas that I can use in the classroom to help my students and that allows them to feel engaged. I especially aspire to create tasks that are meaningful, including homework. This curriculum project allowed me to focus on research and building my homework curriculum that could be deemed meaningful to students. I feel that I successfully created four homework assignments that focus on essential life skills and allow students the opportunity to include their unique perspectives into their products. In this chapter I discuss what lessons I learned, educational implications, project implementation plans, limitations of the project, and future research or project suggestions.

### **Lessons Learned**

Though homework is constantly up for debate in the field of education, this project gave me the opportunity to research, experiment, and develop four distinctly different and inclusive homework assignments that are meaningful to student learning. Throughout this process, there have been several lessons learned that I can now integrate into my future lesson planning, curriculum development, and assessment building.

### **Student Choice**

First, through my research, I learned about a variety of strategies to use to make homework more engaging for students. One approach that stuck with me the most was student choice (Griffiths, Miller, Risser, 2013). Allowing students to choose is not only a great way to include students in their own learning, but students are also more invested in their education since they played a part in creating their learning (Miller, 2010). Additionally, I learned that

student choice is a form of personalized learning, a strategy to cater to the individual needs of students in curriculum development (Berry & Wickett, 2009). Personalized learning is not limited to homework development, but can expand to in-class strategies related to classroom management or lesson planning.

### **Desired Outcome**

Second, I learned that having a desired outcome and goal for students is a huge step in providing meaningful curriculum for students (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005). As an English teacher, I was able to narrow my goal setting focus to skill development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Knowing I wanted to improve student skills, I used backward planning and Understanding by Design to ensure that student goals were always the end goal. I learned that in having an end goal, my plan was more focused, my students were aware of their goals, allowing their studies to be more concentrated. Connecting skills learned in the classroom to real life skill necessities also helps students to feel engaged (Admiraal & Buijs, 2013). One thing I learned that I need to improve upon is making connections of skills learned in class to real life. I need to make the connection more obvious and specifically discuss the connection with students. Regarding the four assignments I developed, I learned that narrowing my goal focus to one of the four primary and critical skills taught in English Language Arts helped in creating a more specified curriculum that could enhance student skills. Additionally, standards-based goals are a great way to ensure that students are meeting state goals and that my curriculum is based on pre-determined skills that students need to graduate high school (CA CCSS, 2013). Separating the four assignments into reading, writing, listening, and speaking, allowed for assignments to provide students opportunities to enhance each skill individually. It also helped me to discover

how to incorporate different assessments into an English classroom so that I am not merely assigning essay after essay.

### **Cross-Curriculum Homework**

Finally, as a teacher who holds a dual credential in English and Social Studies, this project also allowed me to see how assignments could be developed to molded into different curriculums (Adler, Applebee, & Flihan, 2007). For example, the reading curriculum could easily be adapted into a history classroom by assigning non-fiction books from a specific time period or modified into a psychology class by assigning novels that focus on people with mental disabilities or anxieties. The writing curriculum can be tailored into an art class by having students create art in different mediums rather than genres. The listening project could be molded to fit a science curriculum by having students interview adults in the scientist field rather than focus on political conversations. The speaking project could easily be adapted into any subject by merely changing the speech topic to fit an issue of the teacher's choosing. Adaptable assignments do not only allow for other subjects to use this curriculum but allow me the opportunity to use this assignment in different grade levels as well by simply changing the main content assigned to students or changing the area of choice for the students.

### **Educational Implications**

Based on what I have learned from this project, the main takeaways that I received and can encourage my fellow educators to pursue include: backward planning, implementing student choice, adaptable assessments, and getting to know your students.

### **Measurable Goals**

First, planning to create specific, measurable goals can help to create curriculum both inside and outside of the classroom that is meaningful for students (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005).

If you have unclear goals, then your curriculum will also be vague for students. If your goals are clear and concise, then share those goals with students, so they have a clear purpose and reason to complete their assigned tasks.

### **Student Choice**

Second, student choice can also be at the forefront of your teaching without neglecting goals, standards, and other curricular requirements (Griffiths, Miller, Risser, 2013). Students value the things they choose, and if they have a choice in their education, then they will value their education more. Options can be big or small. Let students pick their essay topic from a list you create. Let student pick what novel they read for a whole unit. Even let your students choose whether they get free time after a quiz, or they read as a class. Choice can be given in a variety of ways and should be incorporated into a class even if you let students take small steps at first.

### **Adaptability**

Third, all of these projects can be adapted, manipulated, and molded to fit into any unit in your content. I encourage educators to take flexibility into consideration in their future planning. If you have projects that are adaptable to outside curriculums, you are then opening up opportunities to collaborate with peers outside of your field to share ideas and potentially create interdisciplinary units. Demonstrating to students that subjects are intertwined can not only benefit their education but can show them that as they enter the real world, they may experience times when they are working with people outside of their field and that it can be easy to operate and collaborate with others from all areas. Finally, poll your students and get to know your students. You cannot create something for them without knowing them first. Ask basic questions about their background, culture, and learning preferences. Then later expand your knowledge to understand students at a deeper level to provide the best education you can for them. It is

difficult to create and implement curriculum if you do not know where students are at and where their goals should be. It is also difficult to incorporate cultural inclusivity if you are not aware of student backgrounds. Knowing your students can help you to create more accurate goals, more inclusive lessons, and a diverse curriculum that reaches all students.

### **Project Implementation Plans**

I plan to implement this into my 10<sup>th</sup> grade English classroom. I hope to implement all four curriculums over a whole school year, assigning two projects in the first semester and two in the second. After applying the projects in the classroom, I plan to poll the students to discover what areas of the project they enjoyed and what areas they struggled with to modify and adapt future implementations. I then plan to expand these projects to be implemented across a whole year, meaning the same project can be used multiple times across the year in different units. For instance, I can mold the listening project with a racial profiling unit, examining how prejudice affects a variety of people by studying their personal experiences in student-conducted interviews. I later plan to work with my department to encourage other teachers to implement the same or similar projects with their students to see if it can be applied within a whole grade and later entire department capacity. After implementation, I will encourage my peers to poll their students as well to find commonalities of positive and negative feedback from students. My hope in doing this is that implementing at the department level will later lead to collaboration with other departments to create interdisciplinary units that incorporate these projects with multiple subjects in mind. Realistically, as a dual-credentialed educator, I would love to teach a combined humanities class where I can incorporate these projects as cohesive units for one class that already merges different subjects. Using these projects as a basis for skill building with different subjects, allowing students to see how the same skills are used in multiple facets of life.

### **Limitations of Project**

As with any project, this has three main limitations. First, and most apparent, the focus of this project is through an English lens, maybe even a humanities lens. Though I discuss and include examples of how this project may be used in other subjects, how can homework be meaningful to math and sciences? How can all aspects, meaning all four curriculums, of this project be beneficial to other subjects? One subject I struggle to see this work in is math. How can an interview project that focuses on building listening skills be adapted and implemented in a subject that has specific equations and mathematical skills taught and used? Second, this project is created based on knowledge of students and research of curriculum strategies. One thing it is lacking is the opinion of students. Since I do not have student opinions on homework, I plan to implement these homework assessments and later poll my students to discover if these projects truly are meaningful and beneficial to students and their goals. Finally, these projects were created around skill building; however, they lack specific connection to real life within lesson plans. In the future, I hope to enhance these projects to indeed demonstrate how the skills learned are skills used in colleges and careers in the future.

### **Future Research or Project Suggestions**

There are many ways in which I can expand this project to develop different or enhanced homework curricula. First, I would love to explore the gradual release of responsibility model more to see how these strategies can be used in all aspects of the classroom and even into student home lives. For instance, how can teachers work with parents to gradually give students more and more responsibility both in school and outside of school? Second, student choice stems from personalized learning strategies. So, research can be conducted on other forms of personalized learning, including an in-depth survey of students and building classroom cultures that adhere to

a personalized learning environment. How can all assessments be customized and adapted to each student in the classroom? Finally, how can this idea of meaningful homework and curriculum be extended and merged with subjects beyond English? I would love to explore and research the interdisciplinary realm of combining multiple subjects into cohesive curriculums and projects. How can students choose and be given the opportunity to mold subjects and concepts together? Would this be beneficial to student understanding, learning, and skill building? I believe that exploring interdisciplinary projects would be a priority for me in expanding this project's work.

### **Summary/Conclusion**

Homework is a pinnacle part of education and can have tremendous benefits to students if designed and assigned in a meaningful way. This project attempts to create meaningful homework curriculum that keeps students engaged and develops essential skills that are enhanced over time. The homework assessments were designed with a backward planning process in mind, developing clear goals first, and realistic assessments later. The use of gradual release techniques allows for students to engage both inside and outside of the classroom with generous support and lead in from the educator. Students were taken into consideration and are allowed the opportunity to choose how they learn and what they produce. And finally, students are building life skills that will be used beyond the classroom and help to give their high school education purpose.

This project sought to provide one way in which educators can successfully build homework assessments that go beyond rote tasks and provide students with attainable high expectations. My hopes for this project were not only to provide an example for others but to prove to myself that there are ways in which you can engage students of all backgrounds,

abilities, and interests, to complete a task that is similar in many ways but unique to them. As a new educator, entering a classroom can be a daunting task, knowing that thirty-five plus students are watching your every move and relying on you to provide knowledge. Now, having the ability to express to students that what they are doing is meaningful, and based on research, gives me an added edge to allow students to feel comfortable knowing that what I ask of them is going to enhance their skills, is doable, is purposeful, and overall, is meaningful.

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