

DIGITAL GUIDED WRITING INSTRUCTION

Digital Guided Writing Instruction: A Resource Collection for Distance Learning

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Abstract

This project created a digital resource collection that provides virtually guided writing instruction to students in distance learning environments. The collection targets third-grade students and teachers and provides four lessons that instruct users on narrative, opinion, summary, and informational writing. The collection was created to address the lack of guided writing instruction that is available in a purely virtual format. The need for this kind of a curriculum arose as a result of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, districts around the world turned to distance learning as a temporary alternative to in-person instruction. With this unprecedented shift came a number of challenges as educators, districts, students, and parents were left with little to no time to adapt to these changes. As a consequence, traditional school hours were no longer accessible to all families due to their varied work schedules and home lives during the pandemic. This made live virtual instruction an inequitable solution for replacing in-person teaching. To address this constraint and the need for a more equitable form of guided writing instruction, a literature review was conducted on effective writing practices, learning with technology, and student motivation. These findings inspired the idea of creating a self-accessed, self-directed, self-paced, and predictive digital resource collection that meets the writing needs of students who are active members of a distance learning community. Since not enough research on distance learning currently exists to measure the effectiveness of this collection, future researchers can further the value of this project by evaluating it under the lens of future findings on remote learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction Digital Guided Writing Instruction: A Resource Collection for Distance Learning

Introduction and Definition of the Problem

This project is a digital resource collection that addresses the dire need for guided writing instruction in remote learning environments where direct, live instruction is not a possibility. Specifically, the collection covers narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing styles. The need for this form of virtual guided writing instruction arose within the context of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, which prompted the mandated closure of schools nationwide. As a result of the closure of schools, distance learning was instated.

This transition left little to no time for educators, administrators, and districts to adapt and prepare for off-site teaching and learning. As a result, many teachers were left to their own devices in regards to establishing their earliest efforts to keep their students learning. Thankfully, generous corporate donors allowed students to use their services and products free of charge during this period of time. The outcome of these efforts, combined with those of individual school districts, was that technology and the internet became present in many households that would otherwise not have access to the at-home technology necessary for distance learning to occur.

With this achievement in place, school districts were able to launch a more formal approach to distance learning. However, a number of challenges still persisted. One such difficulty pertained to the varied obstacles that were present in each learner's homelife. To better explain, some students' parents were classified as essential workers. This, in turn, resulted in situations where irregular work schedules interfered

with the ability of some students to engage in distance learning during their regular school hours. Notably, the amount of instructional time that teachers could occupy was greatly restricted to accommodate these new barriers and household difficulties. Due to constraints such as these, live and direct instruction became an inequitable solution for meeting the needs of all students within the context of distance learning.

Based on these unique considerations, the need for flexibly delivered and accessed instruction became apparent, and while some of the district-adopted resources were suitable for such a purpose, guided writing instruction was essentially non-existent. This observation was reiterated by the parents of my students who sought solutions reflective of the in-class instruction.

Statement of Problem

The problem this project addresses is the lack of guided writing resources that are currently available in a fully online instructional format. According to Graham & Perin (2007), “providing more opportunities to write without effective instruction and motivation is not enough to improve writing quality” (p. X). Considering this, elementary students are at an even greater need for this type of directed instruction because they are just beginning to build their understanding of writing, its range of purposes, and its many rules and formats. As Dean (2010) writes, “We must get students writing, true. But we must also provide them with instruction about writing if we expect them to develop as they can” (p. 26).

Thus, the purpose of this project was to create a digital resource collection that can effectively teach narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing to students, even when instruction is limited to remote learning situations. A resource collection in

this format was appropriate because it allows students to access the same resources and instruction at their own pace and on their own schedule. This was a necessary consideration for this project because at the time of its creation, diverse home lives often prevented students from being able to share the same schedule.

This digital resource collection needed to extend beyond what had previously been included in many Language Arts curriculums. To explain, many of the existing Literacy resources that are commonly licensed to schools included online platforms and learning activities, but these resources fell short in their direct instruction and modeling capabilities. Up until the implementation of distance learning, these gaps had been filled in by educators who provided flexible and targeted instruction within their classrooms.

At this time, technology has become an accessible resource in many districts due to the impressive efforts of schools, donors, and communities, who have been working tirelessly to overcome the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 related school closures. Despite this meaningful progress, the other essential responsibilities that impact students' at-home schedules cannot be overlooked and it needs to be recognized that their access to at-home learning will remain unique and unpredictable.

Considering this, live video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom provide an inequitable solution to this issue. Based on this deficit, self-accessed digital resources are not only important, they are a necessity in the same way that having technology in the home is essential for maintaining access to public education and teacher-student communication at this time.

Significance of the Issue

A resource collection that fulfills the need for guided writing instruction is important because school in the traditional sense may remain altered for an extended period of time. Based on this likelihood, educators will need new and purposeful resources that have been designed to address the need for guided writing instruction in settings where live instruction is not possible. Without guided instruction, academic growth and achievement will likely slow, decline, or regress in many students.

Finally, such a resource collection is of lasting value due to its ability to transfer into classrooms that promote future-skills and blended learning environments, such as the flipped-classroom. It can also find a meaningful purpose in offering more differentiated writing instruction in general education classrooms. Thus, the project's wide range of applications makes this collection a relevant, long term asset, even after in-person instruction resumes.

Preview Literature

Due to the unprecedented nature of Covid-19, school closures, and the instatement distance learning, which occurred just four months prior to this project's creation, little research currently exists on this topic. Due to these constraints, I focused my research on the best practices for writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation. Within these topics, I identified important findings that could guide and support the design of this resource collection.

Research on effective writing strategies highlights an array of pedagogical strategies for fostering successful writing development. These instructional approaches include using mentor texts and modeling (Dorfman and Cappelli, 2017), providing

specific feedback, engaging students in meaningful tasks, exploring a range of writing styles, scheduling regular opportunities to write, and providing purposeful scaffolds like writing frames (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013). These findings guided the choice of content that this collection covers as well as the instructional strategies that were used to design each lesson.

Studies on learning with technology showed the ways in which applications like word processors can benefit developing writers. The digital tools these platforms provide can be used to provide a great deal of support to students and can serve a wide range of purposes (Graham et al., 2013). Technology was also found to streamline the editing and revising process for learners, making them more motivated to engage in the latter stages of the writing process (MacArthur, 2009). Research on technology in the academic setting also supports the notion that writing with technology is a more effective learning medium than pencil and paper tasks (Graham et al., 2013). Finally, studies on the flipped classroom model demonstrate the ways in which technology can replace in-person instruction (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015). This research influenced the ways in which I used technology in this collection to engage and support students in meaningful learning. The data on blended learning played a more specific role in influencing the structure of this collection and its functions as a whole.

In regards to student motivation, research declares a positive correlation between a student's motivational level and their degree of academic success (Nayir, 2017). To successfully engage students, three common trends were reported to be effective. Those attributes are as follows: autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Daniels, 2010). Furthermore, research demonstrated the need for students to see

personal value in what they are learning. Interestingly, one study found access to technology to be a key writing motivator (Taylor, 2012). This information guided my instructional methods and product design, which emphasize choice, relatability, and support.

Preview Methodology

The educational product I created is a digital resource collection for foundational instruction related to narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing. The lesson catalog targets students and educators in grade three. The collection was designed with the intention of providing meaningful guided writing instruction in remote learning situations that remain anchored in the California Common Core State Standards for Writing.

The resource collection is housed in an interactive writing support page, where students can access various levels of support at the click of a button. The collection was created and stored using Google-Suite, allowing for a connected network of documents to be shared using a live Google Doc as the home page of the support system. This platform was selected for constructing this project because of its ability to seamlessly create and link resources in diverse formats. Additionally, G-Suite provides a reliable and secure storage container for all of the resources that are a part of this collection. Finally, the share settings in G-Suite allow for the collection to be accessed by anyone with a link, eliminating any access barriers related to platform memberships and subscriptions.

This project's design is well suited for the purpose of remote, guided writing instruction because of the flexible levels of support that it provides. To expand, each

topic contains a number of supportive resources that can be utilized to the extent that each individual requires, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

To summarize the collection, a total of four lessons were designed. Each lesson includes a variety of self-selected supports. The collection's flexible design provides students with autonomy over their learning, allowing them to choose between a variety of scaffolds ranging from viewing an example text to interacting with a full guided video lesson. The choice this design affords each learner allows for a customizable and personalized learning experience. Furthermore, this self-determined process will provide students with the opportunity to learn in their preferred instructional style. To offer an example, visual learners will have access to color-coded supports, whereas tactile learners will be instructed to engage in note-taking tasks as they follow along with a read-aloud of a mentor text during the guided instructional video.

Definitions

The following is a list of terms that will frequently occur within this project. These terms have been defined below so that their meaning is understood within the context of this writing.

Blended Learning - a teaching method where instruction occurs in blended formats that involve both traditional in-person instruction and online instruction.

COVID-19 - the virus responsible for the 2020 pandemic that led to school closures and distance learning.

Digital Resource Collection - a collection of digital resources that may include elements such as learning activities, instructional videos, slideshow presentations, and student supports.

Distance Learning - off-site learning that occurs in physical isolation from both classmates and the instructor.

Flipped Classroom Model - a teaching model where instruction and practice activities are flipped so that instruction occurs outside of the classroom, whereas practice activities happen inside the classroom with support from the teacher.

Guided Instruction - supported instruction that is guided by an educator.

HyperDoc - A digital document where a collection of resources are stored and accessed via active links.

Live Instruction - real-time instruction, whether it be in-person or online.

Remote Learning and Teaching - off-site instruction that occurs in physical isolation from others.

Scaffolds - instructional supports for students

Zoom - A live video-conferencing platform that has gained popularity during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary

Due to the unprecedented accommodations that have taken place within the field of education as a result of distance learning, there is now a significant demand for equitable and remotely accessible guided writing instruction in the upper elementary grades. As it pertains to this project, distance learning is defined as at-home learning via remote teaching practices. The implementation of distance learning was in response to the mandated school closures that were imposed as a result of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

This project was created in reaction to the educational needs that I observed firsthand during this unexpected transition, which left educators with little time to prepare a strictly virtual learning environment. Notably, educators have been restricted in many ways in order to uphold the legal and professional duty of providing equal education to all students in the public school setting. This further highlights the need for a flexible and effective guided writing collection that can be accessed by students on their own time. This project aimed to fulfill that need for third-grade teachers and students.

This digital resource collection covers fundamental instruction related to narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing. A total of four lessons were created for this project. In addition, each topic contains a slideshow presentation, a guided video lesson, and two writing frames of differing degrees of support. Within the slideshow and video lessons, a mentor text is provided. To provide a user-friendly point of access, an Interactive Writing Support Page was created as a homepage for the collection. The collection was created using Google-Suite. This platform was selected for the creation of this project based on its ease of access, connectedness, and reliable storage capabilities. A full review of the guiding literature that informed these decisions will be reviewed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Review of Scholarly Literature

Introduction

This project was designed to create a digital resource collection that would address the dire need for guided writing instruction in remote learning environments where direct, live instruction is not possible. Specifically, this collection provides instruction pertaining to narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing styles. A review of the scholarly literature related to the needs of this project revealed three themes of relevance: effective writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation. Current research on these topics will be reviewed in detail below.

Effective Writing Instruction

Current research suggests that writing engagement and success must first begin with a welcoming and safe environment where students can feel secure trying new skills and taking academic risks. One way to foster such an environment is for teachers to write themselves. According to Dorfman and Cappelli (2017), “When teachers share and model with their own writing, they stand with their students as members of the writing community” (p. 12). In doing so, educators also make their thinking and writing processes observable to their learners. Thus, exposure to mentor texts and modeling play an essential role in laying the foundational knowledge and framework students need to take on new writing tasks.

Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) proposed that a second way to achieve this kind of writing environment is to “Provide just enough support to students so they can make progress or carry out writing tasks, but encourage them to act in a self-regulated fashion, doing as much as they can on their own” (p. 13). They also

recommended that teachers maintain the engagement of their students by engaging them in thoughtful tasks such as collecting information for their written works rather than skill-based activities like worksheets, which can be completed quickly, therefore, leaving a significant number of learners disengaged (Graham et al., 2013).

Another characteristic of effective writing instruction is the frequency at which students write. Highly effective literacy teachers schedule students to write regularly and for a variety of reasons, such as to entertain, persuade, and teach (Graham et al., 2013). Notably, these three purposes are directly connected to the California Common Core State Standards for elementary level writing, which emphasizes narrative, opinion/persuasive, and informational writing types (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, 2013). Data from scientific studies showed the undeniable value of frequent writing opportunities within the classroom, finding a positive correlation between time spent writing and writing quality. Additionally, for instruction to be worthwhile, these writing opportunities must involve authentic writing experiences with real audiences and purposes, choice and flexibility in regard to topic and interpretation, and extended tasks about a single topic. The latter being something uncommon in the elementary level setting, where writing products rarely exceed a single paragraph (Graham et al., 2013).

In regards to what should be taught during writing instruction, Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) offered a number of ideas. First, it is suggested that educators directly teach techniques related to planning, drafting, evaluating, and revising the text. At a fundamental level, writing instruction should involve instruction related to how, when, and why different writing strategies are used, while also modeling

these skills in a supportive environment that provides guided practice. Prewriting is another science-based best practice, which involves brainstorming and reading activities, as well as the use of structural guides like graphic organizers. For students to succeed, two key forms of knowledge must be acquired during writing instruction: knowledge of the topic and an understanding of the genre in which the information will be shared (Graham et al., 2013).

Assessment and feedback play an additional role in effective writing instruction. When educators are knowledgeable of their students' progress, they are able to modify their classroom practices to meet the collective needs of their population, as well as the unique personal needs of each learner. When educators offer their students feedback, "they facilitate the learning of writing skills, strategies, or knowledge by helping students evaluate their progress and determine if they need to exert more effort to be successful" (Graham et al., 2013, p. 16).

Similarly, Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdés, & Garnier (2002) shared that two key elements of writing development in students are instructor feedback and the opportunity to revise written works. The success of early writers depends on their access to guidance on refining and evaluating their writing efforts. When done correctly, feedback allows students to progressively absorb the skills that are required to evaluate, modify, and finalize their work with greater precision and independence.

Learning With Technology

Technology offers many potential benefits to writing development and instruction. Digital word processors, for example, generate legible text, allow for easy modification and revision, offer tools and supports, and can be connected to online platforms offering

their own niche benefits and applications (Graham et al., 2013). This notion is echoed by MacArthur (2009) whose research found that “Word processing, spell checkers, word prediction, and speech recognition offer support for transcription and revision” (p. 93). The value of these benefits is affirmed by scientific studies that “demonstrate that students in grades 1 to 12 show greater improvement in their writing over time when they use word processing to write at school versus writing by hand” (Graham et al., 2013, p. 15).

Blended Learning environments, namely the flipped classroom model, offer other meaningful insights pertaining to prerecorded digital instruction in a remote setting. While its design is not a perfect solution for the difficulties of distance learning, this model closely resembles the learning context students and educators are working with at this time. Based on this similarity, the flipped classroom model can offer a foundational map of how to deliver instruction effectively and from a distance.

In the flipped classroom model, educators flip their teaching practices by providing learning opportunities outside of the classroom. This is achieved by providing instructional videos and supplementary resources, and by honing students’ critical thinking skills. In the flipped classroom model, teachers serve as learning facilitators and assistants, rather than instructors. Thus, a teacher’s primary work involves guiding student thinking and conversation, while also providing guidance and feedback. The rationale for a flipped approach relates to a shift in perspective related to the role of technology. What was once viewed as an in-class application can now be utilized as an at-home learning medium. Making such a shift enables students and teachers to

engage in interactive learning inside the classroom during the times that would typically be devoted to direct instruction (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015).

Student Motivation

Three fundamental qualities of a motivating learning environment are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to Daniels (2010), sustained motivation is a personal feat, but it can be fostered by environmental factors. As she goes on to assert, academic motivation arises when learners feel some level of control over their learning, when they feel like an accepted member of their classroom and school, and when they believe that they have the necessary abilities to be successful learners within the academic setting. Students are not content with compassionate teachers and easy work. Instead, they are looking for explicit instructions that provide clarity to what needs to be done, a positive rapport with an instructor that cares about them and the class as a whole, and the belief that they can achieve the academic expectations that have been set for them. It cannot be said enough how much power choice has over student motivation and engagement. As Daniels' (2010) research demonstrated, "When teachers allow their students to make choices about what is right for them, students develop ownership over their learning, which leads to increased desire to participate in school" (p. 26).

Nayir (2017) believed that student motivation is an undismissable predictor of academic achievement. When students are motivated, they are genuinely engaged in their work. When a learner is committed to an academic task they work attentively because they see the value and hold interest in what they are doing. Noting this, educators need to be cognizant of the motivation levels of their learners and must apply

strategies for motivating their students as a means of ensuring their authentic engagement.

Taylor (2012) shared that “When technology in literacy instruction is used responsibly in the classroom, it can foster growth and motivation for all students” (p. 83). Citing an example, Taylor’s work spoke of a study in which unmotivated learners were immediately engaged in their work when provided the opportunity to use the computer lab. Taylor and Daniels’ individual publications seem to come to many of the same conclusions, finding that teachers can inspire students to write by building choice into learning opportunities, or as Taylor (2012) explained, “writing assignments will yield better results if the students are able to have some choice in what they write” (p. 83). Taylor’s (2012) study also highlighted findings involving elementary teachers who attested that a noticeable increase in motivation was observed when student writing was intended to be published online and that, in addition to producing higher quality work, students were more willing to revise their drafts thanks to the ease to which students can edit and modify their writing in digital formats.

Summary

The purpose of this project is to create a digital resource collection that can effectively teach essential writing styles to students, even when instruction is limited to remote learning situations. With this in mind, the themes presented above supported this intention by informing the project’s overall design.

In regards to effective writing instruction, field research demonstrated that students need to feel supported in their learning. This can be achieved through a number of pedagogical strategies such as modeling, being an active member of the

classroom writing community, offering specific feedback, utilizing guided instruction, and providing scaffolding. Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) recommended writing frames as an effective guide for supporting student writing without removing the challenge of crafting personal ideas. Additionally, these experts expressed the importance of frequent writing opportunities that span a wide range of topics and purposes. When viewed in combination with the California Common Core State Standards for 3rd-grade writing, the grade-level expectations emphasize three core topics: narrative, opinion, and informational (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, 2013). These topics align with those recommended by Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013).

Students also need to develop knowledge of what the purpose of each writing style is and of how and when to use it. Dorfman and Cappelli (2017) viewed mentor texts as an excellent option for supporting students with this foundational task. Finally, Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdés, & Garnier (2002) shared that two essential elements of writing development are instructor feedback and the opportunity to revise written works. Without a specific goal in mind and the opportunity to work toward it, students will be less likely to develop the necessary writing skills that lead to proficiency in editing and revising.

As it relates to technology, research in this category showed that struggling writers can greatly benefit from the digital tools that applications like word processors can provide. Research by MacArthur (2009) found that word processors, spell checkers, word prediction, and speech recognition are just a few of the mechanisms that can both support students and streamline the revision process. Similarly, Graham, MacArthur, &

Fitzgerald (2013) found that “students in grades 1 to 12 show greater improvement in their writing over time when they use word processing to write at school versus writing by hand” (p. 15).

In the flipped classroom model, educational videos and supplementary resources take the place of live instruction. In turn, teachers take on the role of learning facilitators and assistants, rather than instructors (Hwang et al., 2015). Given the conditions of distance learning, instruction via technology offers the most suitable alternative to in-person teaching and, thus, this classroom model in particular, held a great deal of influence over this resource collection’s structure and design.

Maintaining student motivation is yet another crucial consideration of this project’s design. Research from Nayir (2017) highlighted the importance of this quality by asserting that student motivation is a significant predictor of academic success. As Daniels (2010) fieldwork explained, academic motivation occurs when learners feel some level of control, relatedness, and competence in the academic setting. Taylor’s (2012) findings, which explored the links between student motivation and technology, concluded that the use of technology alone is enough to foster growth and motivation in many students. Hence, the digital lesson designs in this collection were carefully crafted to be engaging and relatable to the intended users and to provide each learner choice over their learning path, while not neglecting to provide a sufficient support system for students to feel competent and capable.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The learning product I created for this project is a digital resource collection for foundational instruction in narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing. The collection targets students and educators in grade three. The catalog consists of four lessons that have been housed on an interactive writing support page that allows students to access personalized degrees of support with the click of a button. The resources that were created for this project were designed with the intention of filling the dire need for virtual guided writing instruction that is anchored in the California Common Core State Standards during a time of mandated remote learning.

Based on the research that was presented in the previous chapter, this collection was formatted to provide effective, self-administered writing instruction. The resource bundle provides students and teachers with four guided video lessons, four slideshow presentations, eight writing frames, five mentor texts, and a user friendly interface for accessing these resources. The collection promotes feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in users in order to foster and maintain student engagement and motivation, both of which play vital roles in the effectiveness of this catalog. The content in the collection was informed by research on the best practices in writing instruction to ensure a meaningful learning experience is provided in each lesson. Finally, since this collection occurs in a purely virtual format, data on learning technology was utilized as a framework for designing the structure, appearance, and applications of this resource collection.

Design

The resource collection is housed in an interactive writing support page, where students can access various levels of support at the click of a button. The collection was created and stored using Google-Suite, allowing for a connected network of documents to be shared using a live Google Doc as the home page of the support system. This platform was selected for constructing this project because of its ability to seamlessly create and link resources in diverse formats. Additionally, G-Suite provides a reliable and secure storage container for all of the resources that are a part of this collection. Finally, the share settings in G-Suite allow for the collection to be accessed by anyone with a link, eliminating any access barriers related to platform memberships and subscriptions.

This project's design is well suited for the purpose of remote, guided writing instruction because of the flexible levels of support that it provides. To expand, each topic contains a number of supportive resources that can be utilized to the extent that each individual requires, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

To outline the overall collection, a total of four lessons were designed. Each lesson includes a variety of self-selectable supports. The collection's flexible design provides students with autonomy over their learning, allowing them to choose between a variety of scaffolds ranging from viewing an example text to interacting with a full guided video lesson. The choice this design affords each learner allows for a personalized and customizable learning experience. Furthermore, this self-determined process provides students with the opportunity to learn in their preferred instructional style. To offer an example, visual learners have access to color-coded supports,

whereas tactile learners can choose to engage in note taking tasks that follow along with the mentor text segment of the guided instructional video.

Intended Audience and Setting

The target audience for this resource collection is third-grade students and teachers who have access to the internet and a personal computer. The reason that this audience was selected is because this subgroup's instructional needs are most closely related to the purpose that this writing collection serves. In addition, the specified audience is one of the academic groups directly impacted by the lack of foundational writing instruction that is currently available during this period of mandated distance learning. Moreover, since students in this grade level are still learning both the purpose and rules of major writing formats, they will require more thorough guided instruction than what most upper-grade learners require due to their more advanced writing development.

Instruments

The instruments that guided the design of this new resource collection were the California Common Core State Standards for Writing in grade three. The concepts that were emphasized by the state standards for Writing were informational, opinion and narrative writing (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, 2013) These findings informed me of what concepts would be of most value to the target audience of this collection.

Based on my own experiences in the classroom, I also decided to include summary writing because of the frequency at which students are asked to perform this style of writing within the academic setting. Notably, spelling, punctuation, and grammar

were deemed to be unnecessary topics of instruction within this resource catalog because these concepts are already taught in the curricular resources that come with most district adopted ELA programs.

Procedures and Evaluation of Process

The purpose of this project was to create a digital resource collection that can effectively teach essential writing styles to students, even when instruction is limited to remote learning situations. With this understood, the themes covered in Chapter 2 informed the design of this project in a variety of ways.

To begin, the research on elements of effective writing instruction served as a guide for the design of my lesson plans and resources. To make myself an active member of the writing community, the mentors texts in this collection have been authored by myself. This decision was inspired by Dorfman & Cappelli (2017), who believe that “When teachers share and model with their own writing, they stand with their students as members of the writing community” (p. 12).

Based on my other research into effective writing instruction, it became clear that instructional videos would serve as the most reasonable alternative to live-instruction within the context of distance learning. The research also demonstrated that writing lessons are most effective when guided instruction is provided. In that regard, the optimal level of coaching gives students enough support for a successful experience, while not interfering in the opportunities students have to apply their learning independently. As Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) explain, great writing instructors “Provide just enough support to students so they can make progress or carry

out writing tasks, but encourage them to act in a self-regulated fashion, doing as much as they can on their own” (p. 13).

Additionally, the instructional videos in the collection needed to engage learners in meaningful tasks that would link the skills being developed in the academic setting to real-world applications that students would be familiar with. By doing so, students will have previous experiences to reflect upon as they build new understandings. Learners will also see higher value in their learning tasks if they are able to comprehend how the skills benefit them outside of the classroom.

My research on effective writing instruction also demonstrated the importance of writing regularly in the classroom. Research studies show that “increasing the frequency of elementary grade students’ writing improves how well they write” (Graham et al., 2013, p. 15). Noting this, the curricular videos and resources in this collection needed to be broadly applicable in how they could guide learners while remaining precise in the genres of writing that they cover. To achieve this, the lessons address narrative, opinion, and informative writing styles, while also teaching summary writing, a more specified form of informational writing that students must frequently engage in within the classroom setting. This was done in alignment with the California Common Core State Standards. This design strategy allowed the collection to cover the most essential writing types for third-grade students while providing a support system that is not limited to a single assignment. Thus, this curricular resource was carefully crafted to enable students to write regularly in a supported setting, despite learning remotely.

Meaningful writing instruction must also touch on each of the stages of the writing process. As Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) have found, “At the most basic

level, writing strategies instruction involves the teacher explaining the purpose and rationale of the strategy,” while also “modeling how to use the strategy” (p. 17). Since the target audience of this resource collection is third-grade students, it was decided that the editing and revising stages of writing would best be explored as a collaborative process anchored in individualized teacher feedback. Thus, this resource collection focuses solely on the planning and drafting stages. To foster success in this regard, the lessons explain the purpose and rationale of each writing type, model how the writing type is structured, and guide students in noting-taking tasks that will be used for later brainstorming and prewriting activities. Printable graphic organizers and frames provide a final tier of support to students looking for more structured practice. Finally, it is recommended that teacher feedback and assessment serve as a guide for student revision. However, these elements should be provided to each student individually and, therefore, outside of this resource collection.

As it relates to technology, this project took insight from blended learning environments. Specifically, the collection borrowed from the flipped classroom model, where instruction is accessed independently, while learning projects, support, feedback, and guidance are facilitated in the classroom. Despite being unable to recreate this model in its entirety through distance learning, the flipped classroom model provided a strong foundation for the design and structure of this collection as a whole.

To elaborate, this resource collection provides self-administered instruction to students, while assignments, guidance, and feedback occur in an outside setting as mediated by individual instructors. This structural design was based upon the following description by Hwang, Lai, & Wang (2015), which states that “In flipped classrooms, the

teacher's role should be guiding students to think and discuss, and to give professional feedback and advice" (p. 450). In the case of my own students, this will occur during optional zoom meetings and office hours, whereas instruction will take place independently via prerecorded videos.

Technology played a similar role in maintaining the scaffolding and support that is typically provided in the classroom setting during in-person instruction. At the guidance of MacArthur (2009), "Word processing, spell checkers, word prediction, and speech recognition offer support for transcription and revision" (p. 93). This exhibits just a few of the ways digital tools can be leveraged within this resource catalog to heighten student independence and enhance student problem solving; two traits that a successful distance learning experience will depend on. To encourage students to utilize the strategies, the guided video instruction that is provided in this resource collection models some of the tools potential uses. As an example, colored fonts highlight particular segments of text as a strategy for organizing ideas based on role or purpose. Unlike live instruction, another meaningful support learning technology will provide to the students using this catalog is the ability to revisit instruction. Finally, these resources grant students control over their pacing, level of instruction, and degree of support.

Motivation played another vital role in creating an effective resource collection. To foster an authentic desire to engage with this resource, Daniels' (2010) conclusions related to autonomy, competence, and relatedness were used as a guide for motivating students to stay attentive during lessons. The success of this feature was crucial since distance learning requires students to complete their initial instruction and learning

activities while not in proximity to their teachers. As Nayir (2017) asserts, “Students must be actively engaged and show interest in classes to achieve effective learning in school” (p. 60). Because of this, each lesson was designed to be both engaging and relatable. To achieve this, humorous images, animations, and gifs were built into each slideshow to hook students’ interest and maintain their engagement. Each lesson also provides an example that demonstrates how the skill being taught applies to the real-world. This element highlights the authentic value of the content being taught.

As was mentioned before, it was important for students to feel some level of control over their learning within this resource collection. As Daniels’ (2010) research explained, choice enhances student engagement. To provide students with autonomy, the catalog was designed to allow each user to hold control over their learning path for each topic of instruction. For instance, students can begin each category by watching a guided video that narrates and expands on the information contained in the lesson’s slideshow. Inversely, students can bypass the video and opt to receive their instruction by reading and reviewing the slideshow at their own pace. Students also have the power to self-administer any of the resources that are available for each lesson at any time. This design feature allows users to modify their initial learning path. Additionally, it gives students the option to return to a previous resource anytime they need refreshing. Another opportunity for student choice appears in the printable organizers that are available in each lesson. To elaborate, students will have access to a loose organizer as well as a rigid frame. Beyond the collection, it is recommended that students be granted choice over their topic for each writing style during the independent practice stages as well.

Another facet of research into academic motivation declares that students need to feel capable of succeeding before they can feel motivated as a learner. To ensure that every student feels capable of rising to the expectations of the third-grade writing standards, this resource collection was designed with a range of meaningful supports and scaffolds. As MacArthur (2009) reports, “Struggling writers can benefit from a wide range of computer applications for writing” (93). These applications, which include tools like word processors, speech to text, spellcheck, dictionaries, and thesauruses will provide meaningful support to any student using the collection, therefore, boosting their confidence and sense of independence.

Moreover, students of all learning preferences and styles will find their preferences built into each lesson of this collection. Visual learners are able to learn from meaningful images and color-coding, auditory learners have the option to listen along as they read the information being presented in the guided presentation, and kinesthetic/tactile learners are engaged in note-taking tasks as they process the information being discussed in the guided video lesson. Specific sub-groups such as English language learners and struggling readers also receive meaningful support in each lesson through multi-tiered vocabulary, definitions, teacher explanations, mentor texts, and writing organizers. Finally, students have the option to revisit their instruction as often as they need, a perk that is not present with live instruction.

Summary

The purpose of this digital resource collection is to fill the need for guided virtual instruction on narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing. These resources were built around the California Common Core State Standards for Writing and target

third-grade students and teachers. They are best used in learning contexts where live and in-person instruction is not possible or equitable.

The collection was created and assembled using Google-Suite based on the platform's connectivity, ease of accessibility, and storage capabilities. The catalog has been housed on a homepage referred to as an interactive writing support page. From this page, students have access to the four learning topics and all of the resources that are related to each of the individual writing categories. Each topic contains an instructional slideshow, a guided writing video, a mentor text, a real-world example, and two writing frames offering different degrees of support. All of the resources in the collection are self-paced and self-administered.

The design behind each of these elements is grounded in field-specific research and the collection applies the findings of three key themes: best practices in writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation. The content selection and instructional strategies in this project were greatly influenced by the research findings related to effective writing instruction. The organization of the collection and the support that it contains are inspired by educational research on learning with technology. Finally, to ensure student engagement in a purely virtual setting, research by Daniels (2010), Nayir (2017), and Taylor (2012) was used as a framework for incorporating autonomy, relatedness, and competence into the user's experience of this collection. For a more detailed look at this information, please revisit Chapter 2. Otherwise, a close look at the digital resource collection will occur in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Digitally Guided Writing Instruction

Introduction

This chapter presents a digital resource collection that contains four writing lessons that have been stored in a HyperDoc. The HyperDoc is referred to as an interactive writing support page within the collection. The lesson topics cover summary, informational, opinion, and narrative writing. Each lesson provides users with one or more mentor texts, a real-world example of the writing style, a slideshow presentation, a guided video lesson that provides a more detailed commentary over the slideshow presentation, a note-taking video-lesson task, and two writing frames of tiered support.

At the end of this chapter, readers will be able to review the interactive writing support page that houses the learning resources contained in the collection. Readers who are examining this project in a digital format will also have access to the individual resources that are linked on the page.

Sections

Examples

The examples section supplies mentor texts to users. The texts provide students with a reference point in regards to the specific formatting, organization, and language commonly associated with each writing type. Furthermore, excluding the narrative examples, all of the mentor texts have been color-coded. This was done to assist students with comprehending and identifying the different roles specific sections of text play in the overall writing type. The mentor narrative texts were not color-coded because there is more overlap present in the structure of this writing style.

Slideshows

The slideshow section is where users access the foundational information for each lesson. Each presentation leads users through the key concepts related to the particular writing type being examined. Additionally, the presentation shares a real-world example of the writing type being used authentically and outside of the academic setting. As users engage with the lesson, they will begin by viewing a supply list. Next, users will explore the essential components of the writing type, view a mentor text, and then review the key concepts they were introduced to at the beginning of the lesson by analyzing and dissecting the example text.

Videos

The video section offers users a guided video lesson that follows the slideshow presentation. Each video provides a voiceover commentary that offers viewers more detailed information than the slideshow alone. The video also instructs students to fill out a writing frame (listed in the lesson supplies) as they listen to the mentor text being read aloud to them. This note-taking task is intended to assist learners in connecting the key concepts of the writing type to an authentic sample. This also better engages auditory and tactile/kinesthetic learners.

Printables

The printables in this collection provide users with helpful writing frames. Every lesson contains two different options in order to provide flexibility over the level of support learners receive. One frame is basic in design and loosely structured, while the other is rigid and highly structured. This allows students to access an appropriate level of support based on their individual needs. This also provides each user with autonomy

over the resources that they view as best suited to their learning preferences and competence level.

Using This Collection

Educators. To use this digital resource collection, teachers simply need to share the Interactive Writing Support Page with their students. This can be done by completing the following steps:

1. Access the master copy of the Interactive Writing Support Page by clicking this link: [Master Copy of Interactive Writing Support Page](#)
2. Click the share button and copy the share link.
3. Post the copied link to a location where students can access it.

If an educator wishes to give their class access to this digital resource collection in isolation from other classrooms, the teacher must have a Google Account and follow these steps:

1. Log in to your Google Educator Account.
2. Access the master copy of the Interactive Writing Support Page by clicking this link: [Master Copy of Interactive Writing Support Page](#)
3. Click the file and select “make a copy” for each resource.
4. Title your new copies.
5. On your personal copy of the Interactive Writing Support page, update the link buttons with the share links of your new copies.

6. Post the link to your Interactive Writing Support Page to a location where students can access it.

After the collection has been shared with students, educators can guide their learners on how best to use the resources within the context of their own classroom culture. This may involve assigning a specific writing type to students for study or this may serve as a general support system for periods of self-determined writing.

Students. Students use this digital resource collection by accessing the Interactive Writing Support Page. Once on the page, students will navigate based on writing categories. Specifically, students will have access to lessons and resources for narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing. Once the appropriate category is located, students can begin their self-directed learning experience by clicking on the specific resource they wish to use.

It is recommended that all users engage with either the guided video or slideshow presentation when first beginning to learn about a writing style. After reviewing one of these resources, students can then move on to the other resources based on their specific needs at a given moment. These recommendations should not be mistaken for a singular learning pathway though. Some students may find a different approach, like starting their learning with a review of a mentor text, to be a more effective passage for meeting their unique needs and learning preferences. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and to pursue the resources and learning approaches that best help them learn and develop.

Project

Interactive Writing Support Page

Informational					
Book Example	Essay Example	Slideshow	Video	Printable 1	Printable 2

Narratives					
Example 1	Example 2	Slideshow	Video	Printable 1	Printable 2

Opinion and Persuasive				
Example	Slideshow	Video	Printable 1	Printable 2

Summaries				
Example	Slideshow	Video	Printable 1	Printable 2

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to create a digital resource collection that can effectively teach narrative, opinion, informational, and summary writing to students, even when instruction is limited to remote learning situations. A resource collection in this format was of significance due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the mandated closure of schools and the installment of distance learning during the 2019-2020 school year. These educational constraints resulted in a dire need for guided writing instruction during a time when both in-person and live-video-instruction were not plausible.

To fill this need, I created a digital resource collection that is self-accessed, personalized, and self-paced. The collection targets students and teachers in third-grade and provides four writing lesson categories: narrative, opinion, informational, and summary. Each category contains a slideshow presentation, a guided video lesson, a real-world example, a mentor text, a note-taking task, and two writing organizers of varied support.

These resources have been housed on a HyperDoc referred to as an interactive writing support page. From this page, users can access a self-directed and customizable learning pathway at the click of a button. These design and content decisions were based on the California Common Core State Standards for Writing and on research related to three core themes: effective writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation.

Lessons Learned From the Process

At the beginning of this process, I had a basic concept in mind for the design of this resource collection. However, as the development process went on, the vision for this project evolved. By addressing a new complication within the field of education, I was tasked with problem-solving an issue that had not yet acquired research findings from leading experts in Education. This pushed me to begin thinking and problem-solving like a researcher myself. I turned to my own observations with distance learning and used my personal experiences with remote teaching to define a problem my own community was struggling with. I then began moving forward with my plan to contribute new curricula to my field of study by working to identify a solution for the lack of connected and thorough virtual guided writing instruction that was available.

To inform my efforts, I turned to research related to effective writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation. These themes taught me a great deal about how an effective solution might function and appear. Research by Hwang, Lai, & Wang (2015) led me to adopt an adapted approach to the flipped classroom model, where instruction occurs independently through instructional videos and supplementary resources, whereas teachers take on the role of learning facilitators. Through the findings of MacArthur (2009), I was able to consider the ways that tech-applications, such word processors, word prediction, and spell checkers, can be leveraged as a support system for students being educated in distance learning environments.

In regards to student motivation, Daniels' (2010) research taught me about the ways that student motivation is fostered within the academic setting. This led me to focus on the design of this collection on the principles of autonomy, relatedness, and

competence. A study by Nayir (2017) shared similar ideas, stressing the importance of authentic engagement in relation to student success. This data, combined with the findings of Taylor (2012), led to the idea of utilizing the isolating features of learning on a personal device as the groundwork for focusing on a personalized and customizable learning pathway via self-directed resources. Through this concept stemmed from the idea for an interactive writing support page as an access point for users.

I was also able to grow my knowledge of effective writing practices as I researched how to best select, teach, and administer content in this resource collection. The findings of Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013), found that writing instruction should “Provide just enough support to students so they can make progress or carry out writing tasks, but encourage them to act in a self-regulated fashion, doing as much as they can on their own” (p. 13). Additionally, it is recommended that instruction and learning tasks cover a wide range of writing styles and purposes. These suggestions influenced the lesson topics that I selected and taught me about the importance of appropriately differentiating instruction. I now know that success and growth rely on a delicate balance of being supported and challenged.

Through the ideas of Dorfman and Cappelli (2017), I also grew as a member of my classroom’s writing community. As they express, “When teachers share and model with their own writing, they stand with their students as members of the writing community” (p. 12). This inspired me to plan, draft, edit, revise, and publish my own mentor texts for my students to learn from. This process deepened my personal understanding of these concepts and gave me a unique look into some of the struggles that my students may encounter. Based on these insights, I learned how to more

accurately predict my students' potential instructional needs. This direct experience as a writer held a large influence over the predictive teaching strategies and scaffolding that make up this digital resource collection. I believe this process taught me how to be a more effective writing teacher.

Recommendations for Implementation

This digital resource collection will be of value to students and educators both during and after distance learning. During periods of remote learning, this collection will provide meaningful guided writing instruction that is flexible in pace, level of independence, and scaffolding. Moreover, this collection is self-accessed. This is a crucial feature for distance learning environments because student schedules are impacted by their unique home lives and the outside responsibilities of their guardians. Self-accessed materials allow students to work around these difficulties by accessing their lessons at any time of day.

It is recommended that any teacher using this collection within a distance learning context supplement these lessons with virtual check-ins or conferences. This can occur in small group-setting or one-on-one. During these meetings, teachers are encouraged to provide students with explicit feedback, to offer guidance with revising, and assist with editing. This is an important recommendation to consider since the resource collection only targets the planning and drafting stages of writing. It is also recommended that educators use this collection in conjunction with their district's primary English Language Arts curriculum.

In regards to the value of this project beyond distance learning, the collection still offers many meaningful classroom applications. To explain, these resources can offer

instruction on writing topics that require extended development. This application would greatly support classrooms employing a Writer's Workshop into their daily schedules. In this situation, students would be able to revisit topics as needed to support their development of larger written works. This would also provide better differentiation concerning writing instruction and assignments because students would be better able to work at their ideal pacing. Similarly, students would have the ability to revisit topics within each lesson as frequently as they need. This individualized experience will allow advanced writers to publish multiple samples, whereas struggling writers would be granted more time to truly work through and refine one or two samples. In this environment, students are constantly engaged, especially when granted autonomy over their writing topic.

This collection can also be used when educators desire to work with small groups of students. In this context, the majority of students can refer to this collection for guidance, allowing time for the teacher to directly support the needs of a subgroup within the classroom. This use is only recommended once an educator has collected enough data to form learning groups of similar needs. This application would pair well with classrooms that engage in Writer's Workshop.

Finally, these resources can be used to support flipped classroom models. Specifically, this digital resource collection can enable educators to assign writing instruction as homework, therefore, making more classroom time available for collaborative learning projects, directed reteaching, and individual support. In this context, it is again recommended that educators pair this curriculum with the primary English Language Arts curriculum that was adopted by their district. This is because this

resource collection only covers writing instruction related to planning and drafting.

Additionally, this collection does not address spelling, grammar, and punctuation, since those concepts are traditionally covered by a district's primary English Language Arts curriculum.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this collection is that it is a virtually accessed curriculum. If students, teachers, or districts are in a position where access to the internet and a device is either inconsistent or unavailable, this resource bundle will be poorly suited to their specific needs. Additionally, based on the learning context this collection is designed for, it has a limited capacity to reactively address student needs. Instead, this collection was designed with predictive scaffolding and universal instructional approaches. This direction of design was necessary based on the constraints of distance learning, which do not allow for in-person instruction. A third limitation of this curriculum is that it only teaches the first two stages of the writing process: planning and drafting. Due to the age of the students who make up the target audience of this project, editing and revising are best addressed in a directed setting that allows for personalized feedback and guidance. As it pertains to research, there is little to no data available on distance learning. This is because the COVID-19 pandemic is still active at the time of this project's creation and not enough time has passed to effectively study the impacts of school closures and remote learning have had on learning. This poses a direct limitation on the design of this collection, which aims to address the lack of prerecorded guided writing resources that are currently available. Until data becomes available on

this topic, there is no immediate way to evaluate the effectiveness of this project's design.

Future Directions

Due to the limited data that is available on distance learning, future researchers would further the findings of this project by analyzing its design, content, and instructional practices through the lens of a more informed understanding of distance learning. As studies begin to qualitatively and quantitatively assess the successes and shortcomings of remote learning, virtual curriculums, and virtual teaching, it will be valuable to compare those findings to the rationale and design of this project. If, at that time, it is determined that this digital resource collection was successful in meeting student needs and fostering academic growth in learners, this project will serve as an effective guide for educators navigating through similar circumstances in the future. Inversely, if future research shows that the design elements of this project fail to meet the best practices for effective distance learning, valuable details about ineffective practices can be better understood through the data that is generated by this project.

Conclusion

During a time of unprecedented change within the field of education, students, teachers, districts, and parents were left with little time to adjust to a period of mandated distance learning. This shift came in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted school closures across the globe. During this time, educators scrambled to reinvent the academic experience virtually. Over time, the dire need for virtual guided writing instruction became apparent. This project aims to solve that issue for third-grade students and teachers.

Due to the limitations to research on distance learning at the time of this project, three core themes were used as guides for the design of this digital resource collection. Those themes were effective writing instruction, learning with technology, and student motivation. The findings of educational experts on these topics informed my decisions related to the content, appearance, instructional approaches, scaffolding, and engagement. This resulted in an interactive curriculum that is anchored in autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Student learning is self-accessed, self-directed, self-paced, and customizable.

The finished resource collection contains four writing lessons covering informational, summary, opinion, and narrative writing. The lessons and all of their supporting resources are housed on a HyperDoc referred to as an interactive writing support page. Each lesson contains a slideshow presentation, a guided video lesson, a real-world example of the writing style's applications, a mentor text, a note-taking task, and two writing organizers of tiered support. The guided video lesson covers the information presented in the slideshow, but with more detailed voiceover commentary.

The objective value of this digital resource collection will weigh heavily on the findings of future researchers. Until more data is available on distance learning, best practices for remote teaching, and the impacts that these factors have played on education, it is impossible to measure the true effectiveness of this project. By evaluating this collection under the lens of later findings, valuable insights can be made available to future educators and researchers who are involved in similar educational contexts.

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