Best Writing Practice for Implementing Units of Study in K-5 classrooms
Vista Unified School District
Academic Year 2016-17
6 units
Submitted by Laurie Stowell

Objectives:

(1) Participate in the planning and facilitation of elementary teacher professional development, 2) Provide ongoing support to district literacy coaches to build internal capacity, 3) Provide ongoing support to principals to build internal capacity, 4) Demonstrate classroom lessons and 5) Co-develop a system for district wide calibration, scoring and data analysis of student writing.

1. **Met with ELA/ELD Resource Teachers (RT) as a group three times** to describe overview of the project, check in and get feedback. I also had one on one time with each RT when I visited each school site. We were able to plan next steps for teachers following my lessons, trouble shoot challenges and generally talk about implementing best practice in writing.

2. **Taught Demonstration Lessons every Tuesday in a fourth or fifth grade classroom.** Elementary Literacy Coordinator Wendy O’Connor set up a schedule for me to visit fourth and fifth grade classrooms every Tuesday (see attached schedule “DTiR 2016-2017 Plan for K-5 Writing”) The bulk of my time was spent planning and delivering lessons in all fourth and fifth grade classrooms in Vista. I also “hung out” in the teachers’ lounge at lunch and chatted with teachers. If I returned to a school site (Sometimes I did half the classes one week and returned another day to do the rest), some teachers asked if we could meet to talk about writing in their classroom. During breaks between lessons, I hung out with the RT and talked with her about coaching her teachers.

3. **Principal workshops:** We planned three dates to meet with principals formally (you can see the dates on the schedule provided). I meet with the principals in September and provided a workshop on what to look for in an effective writing workshop and elements of effective “Units of Study” writing lessons. The second and third workshops were cancelled by the district. The principals needed time to talk about the Next
Generation Science Standards implementation among other things. Wendy and I talked about other ways to “coach” principles on effective writing instruction. We think one-on-one meetings are more effective. I would also like to point out that at some of the schools, principals came into classrooms where I was doing a demonstration lesson. One principal (at Olive Elementary) followed me to each class in which I taught and tweeted out pictures. At Grapevine Elementary the principal and Superintendent Devin Vodicka stopped in a classroom for 5-10 minutes. Some principals invited the RT and me to meet with them at lunch or when we had a break between classes. If funded again, we think this is the best model: to schedule time with the principal when I am on site, talk with them and answer questions and concerns they have.

4. **Calibrate writing:** We scheduled 3 after school meetings for teachers to bring student writing in each of the three domains that we could calibrate and offer as district models. At the first meeting when we were discussing narrative we had two teachers and one RT attend. We talked through the writing we had and brainstormed ways to get more teachers involved. The district could not offer incentives or any more PD days and so our options were limited. We cancelled the remaining two meetings. But we did put out a call to all the RTs to collect exemplars for each writing domain in each grade level. We may be able to work with the papers we have collected at a summer workshop or one workshop next academic year.

5. **Final Evaluation:** I met three times one on one with Elementary Literacy Coordinator Wendy O’Connor to check in with her about how things were going and how I could revise as necessary. We were also regularly in touch by email and phone calls. I also asked the Resource Teachers (RTs) to provide feedback about what was helpful, not helpful and any other comments they had about the coaching and demonstration lessons. Eleven RTs responded (I hadn’t been to all the schools at the end of March when this survey was administered.) The feedback from the RTs is provided below in its entirety.
DTiR 2016-2017 Plan for K-5 Writing

Goal: Provide ongoing planning, professional development and support for the coaches, elementary teachers and principals in implementing the Units of Study and provide best practice in writing in elementary classrooms.

1. Coach support and Teacher support through classroom demonstration lessons:

Dr. Laurie Stowell will demonstrate a Writing Workshop lesson in every 4th and 5th grade classroom across the district. She will work with each Resource Teacher (RT) to arrange a schedule that allows her to teach up to four 45 minute lessons in a day. The first school will be Olive. The RT at Olive will then go to the subsequent school to whisper coach with the RT and classroom teacher at that school while Laurie is teaching the class. The RT at that subsequent school will then be able to whisper coach with the teachers as Laurie continues teaching in each class, as well as feel more comfortable demonstrating lessons in other grade levels after Laurie moves on to the next school.

GRR Example:
1. Laurie teaches at OL on 9/13 and 9/20 while the RT (Terri) and classroom teacher watches. RT debriefs with Laurie.
2. Laurie teaches at BH on 9/20 while the BH RT (Letty) and the classroom teacher watch and listen to Terri whisper coaching.
3. Laurie continues teaching at BH on 9/27 while BH RT whisper coaches with the teachers.
4. Cycle continues with new school.

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<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
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<th>Apr</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/13-OL (4)</td>
<td>10/11-BO (4)</td>
<td>11/1-HA (3) &amp; MV (1)</td>
<td>12/6-CA (2) &amp; TH(2)</td>
<td>1/10-LK (4)</td>
<td>2/7-ML (3)</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>4/4-FHO (4)</td>
<td>5/2-M (3)</td>
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<td>9/20-BH (4)</td>
<td>10/18-BO (4)</td>
<td>11/15-MV (4)</td>
<td>1/17-LK (4)</td>
<td>1/17-LK (4)</td>
<td>2/15-GV (4)</td>
<td>VAPA (2) &amp; AL (2)</td>
<td>4/11-FHO (4)</td>
<td>M (3)</td>
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<td>2/28-VAPA (4)</td>
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<td>3/21-AL (4)</td>
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(#) represents number of 4th or 5th grade classes to visit.
Laurie will attend some of the Resource Teacher Monday meetings to provide additional professional development for coaches. These dates are TBD.

2. Principal support:
   - Laurie will attend 3 elementary principal roundtable meetings: 9/27 (2:30-4:00); 1/13; and 4/14 (2:30-4:00) where she will provide 90 minutes of professional development for principals. The sessions will focus on helping principals know what to look for when visiting classrooms during writing workshop time, so that they can support teachers in improving their practice.

3. Co-develop a system for district wide calibration, scoring, and data analysis of student writing:
   - participate in development
   - participate in calibration/scoring
   - Collaboratively identify anchor papers

Laurie will meet three times (dates TBD), one date at the end of each trimester, with a group of teachers who showed an interest during the Summer Institute to go deeper in their understanding of writing workshop. The goal of the meetings will be to identify on demand anchor papers for each grade level for the three text types, narrative, informational, and opinion.

Trimester 1: Ends on Friday, November 4
Trimester 2: Ends on Friday, March 3
Trimester 3: Ends on Wednesday, June 7

Changes in RT Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE TEACHER</th>
<th>SITE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Urena</td>
<td>Bobier-BO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Roberts</td>
<td>Temple Heights-TH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly Arnold</td>
<td>Hannalei-HA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmen Waszak</td>
<td>Maryland-ML</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letty Cimino</td>
<td>Breeze Hill-BH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Morales-Anistro</td>
<td>Mission Meadows-MM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theresa Lucero</td>
<td>Olive-OL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Therisa Cash</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beaumont-BE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindy Ayers</td>
<td>Monte Vista-MV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila Fries</td>
<td>Alamosa-AL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacy Stockford</td>
<td>Empresa-EM</td>
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W.O'Connor, S. Kraft 8.8.16 DRAFT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerri Keen</td>
<td>Lake-LK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivian Corriveau</td>
<td>Grapevine-GV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meg Brady (formerly Peggy)</td>
<td>VAPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leticia Contreras</td>
<td>Foothill Oak-FHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dayna Shanahan</td>
<td>Casita-CA</td>
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**Notes from Teacher Meeting**
Survey responses from Resource Teachers (11):

1. What was helpful?
   * Seeing Lucy Calkins lesson modeled.
   * Shoulder to shoulder coaching with the teacher
   * Modelling actual Lucy lessons
   * Modelling for the RTs
   * Watching student conferences
   * Lunch with the teachers
   * Meeting with the principal
I think she was able to show how easy it is to teach Writer's Workshop/Lucy Calkins. In one grade she did an actual Lucy lesson and I think the teachers got a lot out of it. Everyone loved using the sticky notes for organization. It was very helpful to have Dr. Stowell model a writing lesson for the teachers. The teachers were given some very useful strategies to use with their students. They were very excited to continue to use these strategies.
   * The tie in to reading and writing
   * All of the various topics were helpful. Teachers liked seeing someone else approach it.
   * She modeled lessons based on the needs of the teachers. I had her come at the beginning of the school year, so it was great because it started the year out with great modeling and talking Lucy Calkins.
   * Seeing how you can pull parts from different LC lessons, how to introduce opinion writing, pro and cons routine with stickies
   * the google planning doc to collaborate
   * Shoulder to shoulder coaching.
   * A third party instructor bridged the subject/forced the conversation with all 4/5 teachers since I was new to the site and she visited at the beginning of the year.
   * The demo lesson with students was amazing!

2. What was not helpful?
   * Not blocking time for teacher to meet with Laurie ... how can we make it mandatory that Laurie meet with teachers after the model lesson?
   * Not returning for another visit
   * Some not getting the lessons until the end
   * They wanted to see the Lucy Calkins Structure, the mini lesson, conferencing, and share. Because that is the program that we have.
   * All of it was helpful
   * Teacher buy in; Perhaps RTs could send out a survey with options for types of things Laurie Stowell could do with them while she's there.
   * Even though part of the positive was having you at the beginning of the year
there was so much going on I don't feel like I planned with the teachers as well the purpose of the lesson. Overall it was a very positive experience but targeting to the individual teacher would have made it more impactful.
*The timing/calendar. It would be nice for teachers to be able to sign up for dates throughout the year to observe a lesson in a unit they choose.

3. **Any other suggestions or feedback?**
*Perhaps have Laurie meet with teachers before she models lesson to see where teachers are with writer's workshop and provide opportunity to ask questions.
*I think sticking to Lucy Calkins lessons would be more beneficial since that is our goal in the district. Maybe in the teacher survey ask where they are at and what they would like to see in Lucy.
*A more detailed survey to teachers ahead of time might be helpful. Teachers were a little unsure of how to fill out what type of lesson they wanted.
*Have a prepared Lucy Calkins lesson
*My teachers wanted to see more conferencing and how you handle the rest of the students when you are conferencing, what are the other students doing?
*None--it was all great! I would like to maybe see what kind of lessons or modeling you are doing now towards the end of the year and how it differs from what we did at the beginning of the year. Thanks for all your support!!
*Meet with teacher before and after lesson to meet their individual
*The time with Laurie was extremely valuable but it was unfortunate that teachers didn't always see it that way—perhaps if Laurie spoke with the teachers personally at an RT PD day or at the team's PLC on a Monday the teachers would then have more buy-in and see how valuable time with Laurie is.
*I think connecting with site principal to offer an after school follow up to teachers to debrief your lesson and create next steps would be helpful. While I talk with teachers about writing as much as I can to have someone like yourself with as much experience in teaching writing would really be beneficial! Thank you for all that you did do this year!
*I think it would be very powerful for the teachers to watch a demo lesson during our C & I PD sessions. All teachers could watch Laurie demo the lesson in one class and then return to the PD session to debrief, discuss, and plan.