

Making Writing Instruction Work

Learning Goal:

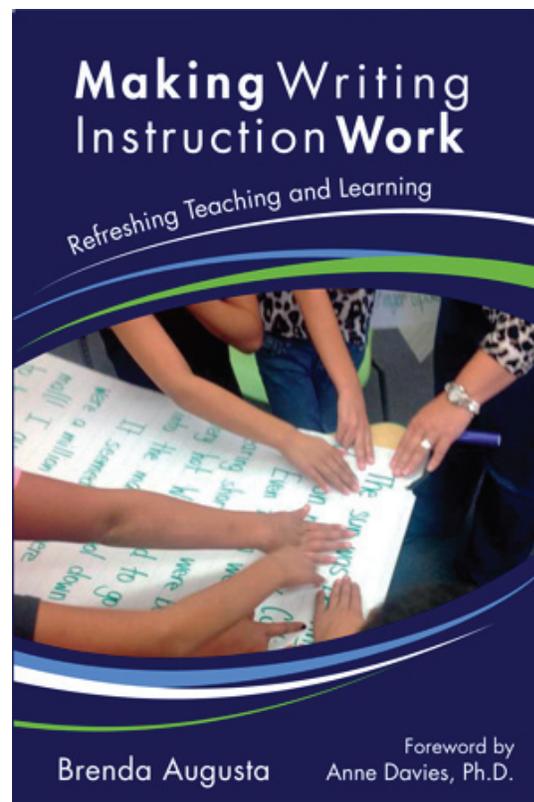
This conversation will focus on applying the big ideas of assessment in the service of learning to the teaching and learning of writing.

Materials:

- *Making Writing Instruction Work* by Brenda Augusta (2015)
- Chart paper and markers
- 4 strips or papers labelled:
 - ~ Impact on Student Learning
 - ~ Increasing Engagement and Learning
 - ~ Reliable and Valid Evidence
 - ~ Developing Informed Professional Judgment
- One placemat drawn on chart paper for every four participants

Getting Started:

1. Beginning with the end in mind, look at the student samples on pages 46-48 and Kaitlin's pieces on pages 80-81. What do you notice about the writing? What can these writers do? (Please remember that these young writers and their teachers have made their learning public so that we can learn together.)
Note: The sample at the top of page 46 is from a Grade 4 student and the bottom sample is from a Grade 3 student. On page 47, the top two samples are from a student in Kindergarten in February and the bottom sample is from a Grade 3 French Immersion student. On page 48, the top sample is from a student in Grade 3, the bottom left sample is from a student in Kindergarten, and the one at the bottom right is from a student in Grade 5.
2. Chart your responses to the questions. Consider the following questions as you review what you have written:
 - What connections to your own writers are you making?
 - What opportunities for your practice might you see?
3. All read the Foreword. Which of the four areas of research are of most interest to you? Post the four labels described in the Materials section in the four corners of the room. Ask participants to move to the corner with the label that is of most interest to them and to talk with the assembled group about why they chose that research area.
4. Number off from 1-6 at each table. Ask each participant to read one of the chapters in *Making Writing Instruction Work*. To make the readings similar in length, group Chapter 6 with the Preface and the Conclusion.
5. Use the attached frame (CODE the Text) on page 3 to share and discuss each chapter.



...continued on page 2

Debriefing the Learning:

1. In new groups of four, draw a placemat on chart paper. (See sample on page 4 of this PLC). Leaving the centre box empty for the moment, each participant chooses a section to write in for five minutes. This can include connections they are making to the book, ways in which the strategies are similar to their own practice and ways in which they are different, and ideas that are resonating and/or questions that are surfacing.
2. At the end of the quiet writing and reflecting time, each writer shares his/her writing. Other group members listen without engaging in crosstalk. When all have shared, discuss and record in the centre box a headline that captures the essence of your thinking and conversation.
3. Share headlines from each group.

Taking Action:

Choose one or more:

- Ask yourself or your team some questions to identify next steps. Consider your answers along a 10-point scale with 1 being at the beginning stages and 10 meaning "We've got this."
- To what degree:
 - ~ do my students understand the learning destination?
 - ~ do I consider evidence from observations, conversations, and products as I assess writing achievement?
 - ~ do I link evidence that my students and I might collect with the learning destination?
 - ~ do my students understand what quality writing looks and sounds like?
- Once your next step is identified, read the chapter associated with it. Use your school-based professional learning time to work on it together. Examples:
 - ~ Create learning destinations together following processes in Chapter 1.
 - ~ Focus on modelling. What counts? Model in front of your students. Bring charts and share with colleagues.
 - ~ Focus on co-constructing and using criteria. Read Chapter 3 and *Setting and Using Criteria*, 2nd Edition (2011) by Gregory, Cameron & Davies.

Extending the Learning:

- Consider reading and discussing the book in your school-based learning team. Read it slowly, taking time to try what is being described between meetings and bringing back artifacts of your work (learning destinations, charts, modelled writes, shared writes, criteria, student samples...) to share with colleagues.
- Observe others putting these ideas into practice – external consultants, divisional or district consultants, school-based leaders, literacy coaches, teacher leaders – and make time to debrief your observations.
- Co-teach writing with a partner – your principal or vice-principal, your colleague, your literacy coach, your divisional support personnel, your learning team – someone who can share in the planning, the determination of the learning destination, the observations and conversations with students, the identification of next steps, the recording of what they see you doing and saying, as you show the students what quality writing looks like.
- Look at student writing samples together. Discuss what quality writing looks and sounds like and what the writers in the samples can do and what their next steps might be.
- Consider reading *Making Classroom Assessment Work*, 3rd Edition (Davies, 2011) to learn more about assessment in the service of learning.
- Consider looking at *Lesson Study: Powerful Assessment and Professional Practice* (Augusta, Gauvreau & Hector, 2013) to take your professional learning on writing (or any other topic) into classrooms.

CODE the Text

Content Summary	Organization
Direct Quotes	Examples from my Practice

Original source unknown

Placemat

