



## ***Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
English as a Second Language / 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>

**Keywords:** opinion writing, blogging, commenting, audience, 21<sup>st</sup> century, communication

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** “Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing” is a six-day unit for English as a Second Language Learners in second grade. This unit can be taught to second through fifth grade students, both second language learners and mainstream students. The underlying premise of this unit resides in the fact that teachers need to employ pedagogy, content, and technology skillfully in order to shape 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career ready students. This unit promotes the belief that technology-enriched learning environments in combination with strong pedagogical approaches can provide meaningful avenues for teaching even content that might seem very abstract to students, such as grammar. Throughout this unit students will work towards reaching specific core knowledge standards related to writing opinion pieces via blogging in an environment where teachers would utilize Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies and Performance Excellence for All Kids (PEAK) Strategies. Besides core knowledge regarding the use of grammar for academic purposes, through the use of Web 2.0 tools, students will also practice other skills like creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills. The web 2.0 tools will empower students by expanding their community of learners from the single setting of their classroom to the entire world while they find themselves emerged in dynamic learning environments.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 12 students in English as a Second Language 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.*

*I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing**

*Margareta V. Tripsa*

### **Content Objectives**

#### Introduction

The basic belief that guided the designing of this unit plan is that teachers need to use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools in order to shape successful 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and citizens. The unit I have designed, “Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing,” is intended for a group of English Language Learners (ELLs) in second grade. It can be used for any second through fifth grade novice bloggers. This unit is intended to teach students the importance of using digital tools for their academic purposes with a focus on strengthening their writing skills. This unit addresses a plethora of aspects related to online interactions such as digital citizenship, online learning communities, authentic audiences, and online collaboration. The beginning of the curriculum will guide the teachers in designing a safe online environment where students feel safe writing in a second language. The unit will outline six lessons that use blogging as a tool to improve students’ writing and grammar knowledge and skills. It will also give teachers ideas for integrating technology to support their instructional objectives.

I will teach this unit in an elementary school in Charlotte, North Carolina. Out of the six hundred students who attend this school, about ten percent receive English as a Second Language services either daily or every other day for forty five minutes to an hour. The community is very supportive of the school and the teachers are really determined to meet the needs of all the students. The teachers’ “whatever it takes” philosophy drives them to find the best ways to help the students succeed in their academic journey. Students enter the education system displaying varying levels of cognitive and language skills, and most parents of English language learners are not equipped to support their children’s academic journey because they themselves lack English language proficiency. Many times these students are in danger of lagging behind their peers because of many other challenges that second language learners face while trying both to acquire language and to access increasingly complex texts and curriculum requirements.

In order to create a more engaging way of teaching writing, specifically the mechanics and conventions of writing online to a group of fourth graders, I will use blogging as the basis for the activities in this unit. The activities I plan to design and implement will focus on features of reflective writing and online interactions, vocabulary, punctuation,

and the three main parts of speech – nouns, verbs, and adjectives. This unit of study will tie parts of speech and syntactic functions to rhetorical purposes: adjectives and adjectival modifiers to blog commenting and complimenting, verbs and predicates to assertions, and nouns and subjects to topics. My ultimate goal is to provide students with tools that will assist them in improving their writing skills by using rich vocabulary and correct grammar forms to convey meaning effectively when using digital tools. This unit will not guide teachers to set up a blogging space, or to teach their students the steps of posting on blogs, but will guide them to help students refine their online writing through blog commenting. In other words, this unit can be used by teachers who are already using blogging and want to focus on teaching their students how to produce quality comments and help them see how grammar can serve their purposes.

## Rationale

The National Center for Education Statistics (2005) reported that 70.1% of students in the US use the Internet for email and messaging, 49.8% using the Internet for purchases and information, 59.3% for playing games, and 82% using the Internet, both in school and outside of school, for school assignments.<sup>i</sup> The accessibility and use of the Internet is inevitable in school as well as outside of it. Hollandsworth, Dowdy, and Donovan (2011) noted that schools face challenges regarding “how to balance online accessibility by students with effective pedagogy, student safety and security, and manageable learning environment.”<sup>ii</sup> Teachers and researchers claim that technology should be an integral part of teaching and learning, but the avenue to successful technology integration is not always very smooth.

While attending the 2012 Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Technology Conference, I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the multiple benefits of blogging in education. Determined to make a difference in my classroom and help my students take advantage of all its benefits, I began researching the use of blogging in the classroom. Kadjer, Glen, and Van Noy (2004) noted that students were “hungry for writing on their classroom blog”<sup>iii</sup>, which is the dream of all language arts teachers. All these ideas flourished in a successful blogging experience in my class during that year. Capitalizing on the benefits of collaborative technology tools, I designed projects that required the use of Web 2.0 tools. Web 2.0 tools are Internet applications that allow users to share information and user-generated content, work in teams, network, cooperate, collaborate, edit, interact, and disseminate information. Students loved using these tools, and as a result of their dedication to make it successful, our class blog recorded a number of ten thousand visitors in just a couple of months after opening our blogging space as indicated by the Visitor Stats widget provided by Kidblog, the blogging platform I used at that time. However, after blogging for a year I realized that the process of ensuring good quality writing oftentimes required extensive editing and revising, which was very time consuming. I always had my students peer edit each other’s work, and afterwards I also worked closely with each student before their work showed up online. It is very

important, especially when working with language learners, to model good writing, and to provide them with ample opportunities of support in order for the students to have a positive experience in a safe learning environment. That is why their work never went online unedited. This unit will give students tools and skills they can employ to improve their writing because it is crucial that students be equipped with the necessary tools to become self-directed writers.

The real world is becoming more and more digital, and students need to have the skills and the tools that would enable them to be successful in school and after they graduate. Today's children, who are referred to as the "digital natives" of this era by Prensky (2001)<sup>iv</sup>, are growing up in the center of a technological revolution. They eagerly welcome digital technologies and long for them whenever they are presented with "old school" approaches to instruction. They feel very engaged and motivated when they use technology and feel at ease when they are online. However, do they really know how to behave in cyberspace and do they know how to use these tools for their instructional benefit? In spite of the many opportunities to write offered by the access to the Internet, students often demonstrate a lack of accuracy in the grammatical structure of their discourse. This phenomenon is due, most of the time, to the fact that current curricular priorities do not emphasize essential grammatical aspects purposefully and intentionally to their students.

This project argues that effective technology integration in the classroom requires skills and knowledge not just of technology, pedagogy, and content in isolation but rather of all three taken together, which results in a unique type of expertise necessary in making meaningful use of technology tools. From an instructional standpoint, this unit started from the premise that quality instruction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is inextricably linked to the effective interdependence among technology, content, and pedagogy as described by Mishra and Koehler (2006) in the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework.<sup>v</sup> Thus, this unit provides teachers with specific directions for integrating technology (blogging and other Web 2.0 tools), pedagogy (Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol Strategies and Performance Excellence for All Kids strategies), and content (writing opinion pieces by paying close attention to noun, verb, and adjective use). In terms of student skills targeted by the implementation of this curriculum unit, this project was driven by four main reasons that have to do with shaping successful 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens. These four reasons are digital citizenship, technological literacy, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and academic writing.

### *Digital Citizenship*

Digital Citizenship refers to the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior regarding technology use. Hollandsworth, Dowdy, and Donovan (2011) emphasized that "digital citizenship can be compared to American citizenship in that all digital citizens have the same basic rights: to privacy, free speech, and creative work rights."<sup>vi</sup> Therefore, it is the

teachers' responsibility to teach digital citizenship in order to shape good character, after all. This concept encompasses a wide range of knowledge regarding aspects such as copyright, plagiarism, and cyber-bullying. Hollandsworth, Dowdy, and Donovan (2011) pointed out that "it is imperative that students accept responsibility for using current and future technology in an ethical and legal way."<sup>vii</sup> However, students need guidance in order to become responsible users of digital resources and since the use of digital tools begins very early, digital citizenship education needs to start in early grades, just like character education.

Also, students need to understand the importance of building a strong, and authentic virtual identity. This is also part of digital citizenship and it explains why this unit's title, "Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing," refers to the fact that students' online interactions determine their digital identity. It is very important to raise awareness regarding this aspect because today even employers admit to checking the social media profiles of candidates when deciding who to hire. Therefore, the way students present themselves online may have great significance for their academic and professional endeavors, as well.

### *Technological/Digital Literacy*

People in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are expected to use effectively the ubiquitous digital connectivity in order to thrive in their jobs. Digital Literacy and Citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century defines digital literacy as "the ability to use technology competently, interpret and understand digital content, assess its credibility and create, and research and communicate with appropriate tools." (Common Sense Media, 2009)<sup>viii</sup> Also, the Common Core State Standards, which guide the public instruction in forty five states in the U.S., call for technology to be integrated seamlessly into instruction, empowering students to be effective consumers of digital content and at the same time producers of content, displaying the ability to critically evaluate Internet resources and to use them to support their learning goals.

### *21<sup>st</sup> century skills*

Blogging develops 21<sup>st</sup> century skills like creativity and innovation skills; critical thinking and problem solving skills; communication and collaboration skills; social and cross-cultural skills; information, media, and technology skills; and productivity and accountability skills. It also develops higher level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, etc.), which include critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking. Students as bloggers are critical thinkers when they think deeply to make relevant connections, when they ask relevant and meaningful questions, when they use evidence and reasoning to support thinking, or when they analyze, reason, evaluate, and synthesize diverse ideas. Also, when students engage in reflective thinking; when they

question the credibility, accuracy, and relevancy of information and sources; and when they value and respect ideas of others, they practice their critical thinking skills. Besides all these aforementioned benefits, the collaboration and the extended learning community bring valuable assets when shaping 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

### *Academic writing*

The fourth reason for creating this unit of study is the increased focus on writing demanded by education stakeholders. Writing is getting more and more attention in today's classrooms mostly because in order to be college ready, students need to master the art of academic writing. Common Core State Standards (2012) claim that "to build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose."<sup>ix</sup> Blogging offers a variety of opportunities for writing. Teachers can capitalize on the benefits of blogging and design rigorous lessons using this digital tool. Arena and Jefferson (2008) noted that "in order to fully engage in conversations through blogs, students will have to reflect on the quality of their writing and the language being used, be more attentive to their audience, and more selective of their sources."<sup>x</sup> Therefore, students pay closer attention to the way they write in their attempt to get their message across when interacting with authentic audiences.

### Objectives

The need for shaping 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers who know how to create and maintain a rigorous digital identity through good quality writing and effective online interactions within the larger digital community constitutes the major goal of the unit "Virtual Me: Using Blogging to Improve Writing." At a smaller scale, I targeted five Common Core Standards that students need to show adequate mastery of in second grade. First, second graders are expected to write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because, and, also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement. I am going to use blog commenting as a means to have students reach this instructional standard. Dyrud, Worley, and Flatley (2005) asserted that "perhaps the most interesting feature is the ability of readers to comment on posts, making it a forum for interacting. It can be an extension of a classroom, where discussions are continued and where every student gets an equal voice. Or it can be a place where new ideas are formulated through collaboration."<sup>xi</sup> Students will learn that online interactions should be pretty much like face to face interactions. For instance, their demeanor should be set by the same strict rules both online or offline. Another aspect that they should be aware of is the presence of a wide audience when publishing online. Davis

and Thiede (2000) documented how writers accommodate to each other online and shift their style in response to each other's text.<sup>xii</sup> Therefore, students will learn how to comment on other students' post, how to give positive feedback, and how to write for a wide audience.

The next standard refers to the production and the distribution of writing. It indicates that second graders are expected to use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing with guidance and support from adults and also in collaboration with peers. Students will have various opportunities to use technology and work cooperatively in this unit. The Common Core State Standards reflect a revitalized emphasis on grammatical accuracy and rigor.

The standard that targets grammar use indicates that second graders should demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking, and it focuses on the following parts of speech: nouns (including irregular plural nouns), verbs (including irregular verbs), and adjectives. Therefore, throughout the unit students will be taught how to use skillfully these parts of speech to convey meaning.

Finally, in order to improve the quality of my students' writing, this unit also targets vocabulary acquisition and use. According to Anchor Standards number four and six, students at this level are expected to consult reference materials when necessary in order to determine the meaning of unknown words, and should use correctly words and phrases acquired through conversation and reading. Consequently, students will be taught how to use glossaries, dictionaries, and thesauruses in order to enhance their writing. Digital citizenship will be a recurring aspect throughout the entire unit.

### **Teaching Strategies**

For this unit, I plan to utilize a variety of strategies, most of them being aligned with the Performance Excellence for All Kids (PEAK) and Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) philosophies in order to help students take more responsibility for their own learning and to enhance the process of teaching and learning. Vogt and Echevarria (2007) noted that the ultimate goal of sheltered instruction is to provide access for ELs to grade-level content standards and concepts while they continue to improve their English language proficiency.<sup>xiii</sup> Therefore, the strategies in this unit will facilitate both content mastery and language proficiency. Rogers (2011) pointed out a key element of the PEAK philosophy stating that "until students have met the standards for the learning objectives, it cannot be said that the teacher has finished teaching or that the teacher has taught the objectives."<sup>xiv</sup> This idea emphasizes the importance of teachers designing and implementing rigorous lessons while being committed to constantly working with all the students until standards are met, setting clear goals and working towards reaching all of them. The two critical elements to be employed while implementing this unit are the

design of a learning environment that is interactive and collaborative, and the integration of technology that best support the learning goals.

### PEAK and SIOP Strategies

Throughout this six-day unit, various PEAK and SIOP instructional strategies will be used. The Performance Excellence for All Kids (PEAK) philosophy indicates specific ways to approach classroom curriculum and instruction and encompasses a set of techniques, approaches, and strategies that helps teachers teach all students to their maximum potential. The SIOP Model is a research-based and validated instructional model that capitalizes on high-quality, differentiated instruction for all students. It ensures high attention to cooperative learning opportunities and interaction, comprehensible input, and scaffolding. It provides guidance regarding the use of best practices for English learners and fosters the academic language development and academic achievement of all English Language Learner (ELL) students in the classroom.

### Blogging

A blog is simply a website, sometimes referred to as an online journal, which maintains an ongoing chronicle of information in reverse chronological order. Arena and Jefferson (2008) noted that “while blogs are commonly thought as of ‘simply happening,’ in fact educators in a media literate world need to rethink and define best practices for using this tool.”<sup>xv</sup> Therefore, repurposing blogs for educational purposes is a critical aspect when using blogging in the classroom. Teachers should facilitate the process of establishing meaningful exchange of ideas among learners, and between learners and the wide audience of the world. Students need to know how to post properly on the web, how to respond to posts, how to cite appropriately, and how to establish their own blogging tone through their posts, building thereby their digital identity. Arena and Jefferson (2008) emphasized blogging potential to develop critical thinking by maintaining that “in order to establish a conversation, to encourage people to comment on a certain topic, and to construct knowledge collectively, students and teachers will have to go beyond the superficialities, posting entries that increase reflection, analysis, discussion, and synthesis.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Teachers can find resources regarding the use of blogs in the classroom on my teacher blog called *Techie Teachers' Tricks*.<sup>xvii</sup> The blog post titled *Blogging in the Classroom* provides teachers with ideas and steps for implementing blogging successfully in the classroom, and this can be found at <http://techieteacherstricks.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/blogging-in-the-classroom/>. It is very important to note that this unit can be implemented by any teachers, no matter whether they have started using blogging as a tool to improve writing or not. In other words, one might say: *Teaching students how to write opinion pieces through commenting sounds very good. However, I have never used blogging with my students.*

*So, what blog posts are my students supposed to comment on since we don't have a class blog, and my students haven't published any posts online yet?* There are two scenarios:

- Teachers who already are using blogging in their classroom can use this unit to improve their students' grammar use when writing opinion pieces, to teach them how to comment online interacting authentically with other bloggers using their virtual identity, and to teach them about digital citizenship in this context through blog commenting. This unit is very versatile in terms of content to be used by students. Therefore, teachers can utilize this unit and have students do blog commenting on whatever content their students had published already on their class blog and use the activities described below to reach the aforementioned goals.
- Teachers who haven't used blogging before would need a few extra days. First, they would need to open their blogging space using the blogging platform of their choice (note that you can find guidance on my teacher blog, *Techie Teachers' Tricks*; the blog published in October 2012 explains the use of blogging in the classroom). Second, in order to be able to comment on blog posts, obviously, there needs to be some content published on that blog. Appendices 4 and 5 are tools that teachers can use to have their students publish some content prior to utilizing this unit to enhance their students' opinion writing skills. Also, for teachers' convenience, I included a reading list for students. Using those books in the classroom is absolutely optional since I envision that most of the teachers who intend to utilize this unit of study might find it more feasible to implement this unit using specific content they are using in their classrooms, which can be any fiction or nonfiction language arts passages, social studies content, or science content. Because of the relatively short time lengths of this unit, it cannot cover all aspects related to blogging, and it focuses primarily on commenting and not on writing and publishing blog posts.

### Bloom's Taxonomy Question Stems

Bloom's Taxonomy provides an important framework for teachers to use in order to focus on higher order thinking. By providing a hierarchy of levels, this taxonomy can assist teachers in designing their lessons. I will use these question stems (see appendix 6) to create discussion starters and reflection prompts for my students to reference when commenting on blog posts. Bloom's Taxonomy changed between 1956 and 2001. The revised Bloom's taxonomy is a two-dimensional framework consisting of the knowledge dimension (factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) and the "cognitive process dimension" (remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create). Milman (2009) maintained that the application of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy for crafting online discussion questions can foster student engagement and higher order

thinking skills.<sup>xviii</sup> The most important change to the Bloom’s taxonomy is the fact that, while the old one had evaluation as the highest level, the revised taxonomy placed creating at the top. The activities for this unit have been created keeping in mind the higher level thinking skills as illustrated by the Revised Bloom’s taxonomy.

### Thinking Maps

Thinking Maps, developed by Dr. David Hyerle, are a set of graphic organizers that integrate thinking skills and mapping techniques. They are invaluable for pre-writing activities and especially for seeing English Language Learners thinking because they are non linguistic representations or visual representations of thinking. Thinking Maps are a shared conceptualization tool in all subjects. Hyerle (1995) asserted that “by using visual tools that correspond to thinking processes, students can organize their ideas on paper or by computer, and as a result, read, write, and think better.”<sup>xix</sup> Thinking Maps will be used in this unit at the pre-writing and drafting stages.

### Classroom Activities

#### Approximate Timeline and Topics for the Unit

Day	Topic
1	Digital Citizenship & Online Safety
2A	<b>For teachers who don’t have a class blog yet- Starting a Class Blog and Publishing a Post</b> -Opening a Class Blog (use <i>Techie Teachers’ Tricks</i> teacher blog for guidelines) -Publishing a Blog Post (see appendices 4 and 5)
2B	<b>For teachers who are already using blogging- Learning About Blog Commenting</b> Writing for a wide audience & Reflective writing (Blog Commenting) (a) give a compliment (b) reflect on the blogger’s thoughts and paraphrase (c) refer to specific details listed by the blogger (d) make a connection (text to self, text to text, text to world) (e) add information (do a quick research) (f) ask questions
3	Blog Commenting (a) and (b) Focus on adjectives punctuation
4	Blog Commenting (c) and (d) Focus on nouns
5	Blog Commenting (e) and (f) Focus on verbs
6	Review and Practice

## Day 1: Introduction to Blogs and Digital Citizenship

The main objective of the day is to have students understand what a blog is and the importance of digital citizenship. Tan T. (2011) noted that “digital citizenship helps not only to keep technology users safe. Digital citizenship prepares students to survive and thrive in an environment embedded with information, communication, and connections.”<sup>xx</sup>

### *Activity 1*

First, students will discuss the concept of blogs after watching a short BrainPopJr video called “Blogs” <http://www.brainpopjr.com/artsandtechnology/technology/blogs/>.

### *Activity 2*

In order to give them the opportunity to digest or reflect on the content of the video, use the PEAK Strategy “Swap Meet” and have the students answer one of the following two questions: *What would you write about on your own blog?* or *What do you like most about blogging?* This strategy requires students to record information on an index card after watching the video for a given prompt from the teacher. The students need to move about the room greeting classmates and exchanging index cards with each person they greet after they read the cards. Afterwards they are to pass the card on to someone else. After a series of exchanges, they return to their seats.

### *Activity 3*

In order to introduce the students to the concept of online safety, have them watch a short Brain Pop video about online safety called Internet Safety. Emphasize the importance of appropriate online behavior and make sure the students understand the rules <http://www.brainpopjr.com/artsandtechnology/technology/internetsafety/>. Also, check out appendix 7 for other resources related to digital citizenship.

### *Activity 4*

Use the PEAK strategy *Clear as a Bell* to have the students disseminate the importance of online safety. To apply this strategy, have the students determine and share in small groups what they believe some students would consider clear points about online safety rules to remember to this point. Then, have each student jot down on an index card the points the group has agreed are clear and need to be remembered. Next, students move about and exchange cards. Students return to their original group to share what they have

learned from other groups. Finally, the groups determine what points are probably confusing to some students in the room.

### *Activity 5*

Share with the students the class blogging rules and discuss them orally. Refer to appendix 2 for a sample of online safety rules that you can use for your students or use the resources provided in appendix 7 for other suggestions.

### *Activity 6*

As a lesson wrap-up activity, hand each student a Two Stars and a Wish worksheet (a worksheet that would have two stars and a cloud drawn on it; see appendix 8). The students are to record on the two stars two important ideas they learned in the lesson, and on the cloud shape, something they have a question about.

## DAY 2: Introduction to Blog Commenting

The main goal of the day is to have students write opinion pieces in which they express their opinion and supply reasons that support their opinion through blog commenting. Note that teachers who don't have a class blog yet need to spend a couple extra days creating one (the blog post titled *Blogging in the Classroom on Techie Teachers' Tricks* provides teachers with specific guidelines regarding how teachers can start their blogging experience) and having their students develop and publish their first post as explained in Activity 2 below. I just need to point out two critical aspects: First, if you want to start use blogs with your students, you need to make sure you have blogging release forms signed by the parents. Blogging Release forms samples can be found on *Techie Teachers' Tricks* blog as well. Also, you can decide to make your class blog either public or private. If you decide to make it private, you don't need any parent release forms.

### *Activity 1*

Given the fact they are never to post any pictures of themselves, they will create their avatar using the website called Build Your Wild Self (<http://www.buildyourwildself.com/>).<sup>xxi</sup> Allowing students to create or pick their avatar in order to personalize their account will motivate and engage them; this quick task, apparently lacking significance, will make your students enjoy blogging even more.

### *Activity 2*

In order for the students to have content to express opinions about later, have them pick their favorite fairy tale and ask them to write a letter to one of the characters. Students can explain in their letters what they liked about the specific character they chose, what

they disliked, and what they think he or she should have done differently in the story. They are to post these letters on their own blog. Give students the directions and the student-friendly rubric to use when writing their letters.

### *Activity 3*

Once they have their blog post published, have the students watch a YouTube video about blog commenting titled “How to Write a Quality Comment.”<sup>xxii</sup> You can also have them watch it twice. The second time, pause the video after each segment and discuss it with the students using the Think-Pair-Share Strategy. Ask the students a question at a time, then have them write the answer on an index card, then have them share it with a partner, and eventually share it as a whole class. Basically, what they will learn is that when commenting they can do six things: (a) give a compliment, (b) reflect on the blogger’s thoughts and paraphrase, (c) refer to specific details listed by the blogger, (d) make a connection (text to self, text to text, text to world), (e) add information (do a quick research) and (f) ask questions (refer to appendix 3 for the Commenting Anchor Chart).

## Day 3: Opinion Writing (draft) & The Use of Adjectives to Enrich Writing

### *Activity 1*

In order to review the previous lesson, use the online tool Today’s Meet.<sup>xxiii</sup> You will be asking the question *What can you do when commenting?* and the students will brainstorm ideas online.

### *Activity 2*

Then have the students pick a blog post they want to comment on and explain to them that they can start writing a blog comment following the suggestions discussed in class. Also, explain to them that just like letter writing, blog commenting should follow a certain format. A comment should have three parts: an introductory part (e.g. Dear Mary), the content of the comment (which should be the longest part in which bloggers are writing their opinions), and a closing section (which should have a greeting and should be signed by the author of the comment). Students should know at this point that comments need to be positive, and that constructive feedback is welcome. They would be trying to do the points a) and b) described above (give a compliment, and reflect on the blogger’s thoughts; see the Commenting Anchor Chart, appendix 3).

### *Activity 3*

Have the students watch a BrainPopJr video called “Adjectives and Adverbs”<sup>xxiv</sup>, a Learn Zillion mini lesson titled “Use Strong Adjectives to Make Narrative Writing Come

Alive,<sup>xxv</sup>” or a TeacherTube video called “Learning About Adjectives.”<sup>xxvi</sup> To make sure that the students have the opportunity to speak multiple times about adjectives, use the Talking Sticks Strategy. Designate an object as the “talking stick” and have student pass it around the group – first clockwise, and later, randomly. Ask questions about adjectives and have the students give examples.

#### *Activity 4*

Have the students play the Dice Game in order to brainstorm adjectives. Using this strategy, the students will race to see who can come up with the greatest number of adjectives. One student in each pair rolls a die until a six is rolled while his or her partner writes as many adjectives as he or she can come up with. As soon as a six is rolled, the die roller takes the pen and starts listing adjectives on his or her piece of paper while the other person grabs the die and starts rolling it. Students continue in this manner until time is called. You can have a support station available for the students, so that whenever the students can’t come up with new adjectives any more, they could run to the support station, read various adjectives, and write them down on their paper.

#### *Activity 5*

Have the students go back to their first comment draft and ask them to add adjectives to make their writing more descriptive.

#### Day 4: Opinion Writing (editing) & The Use of Nouns (capitalization and punctuation)

The main objective of today would be straightening students’ writing by spelling common and proper nouns correctly and using correct punctuation. In order to give students ideas regarding what they could add to their comments, point out points (c) and (d) on the poster about commenting (refer to appendix 3 for the Commenting Anchor Chart). Consequently, on this day when commenting they should be encouraged to refer to specific details listed by the blogger and to make a connection.

#### *Activity 1*

Review adjectives by using the Snowball instructional strategy. Have the students for one to three minutes write independently adjectives on a piece of paper, then ask them to crumple it up into a ball shape. Have the students throw their “snowballs” across the room, and ask them to read the adjectives before crumpling it back and throwing it again. Repeat the process a couple of times.

#### *Activity 2*

Watch a BrainPop Video about proper nouns called “Capital and Lower Case,” a LearnZillion mini lesson titled “Understand the function and use of nouns in a sentence,”<sup>xxvii</sup> or a You Tube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfkHRgqCn0M>. After watching the video have the students write on index cards three common nouns and three proper nouns using correct capitalization.

### *Activity 3*

Explain to the students that today they are going to edit their comments by using the Discussion Starters or Reflection Prompts (see appendix 9) to enrich their comments. They should also check their punctuation, noun, and adjective use.

### Day 5: Opinion Writing (revising) & The Use of Verbs and Transition Words.

The major objective of the day would be to straighten writing by using transition words to make their paragraphs coherent and by focusing on the verb choices they make. Following the six steps listed on the Commenting Anchor Chart, students can (e) add information (by doing quick online research if necessary) and (f) ask questions (refer to appendix 3). Blogging fosters collaboration, and it is a great opportunity for students to learn from each other. Consequently, by adding information when commenting, students exchange information. Also, by asking questions, students maintain an ongoing conversation, which is a great opportunity for them to improve their writing, share content, and collaborate.

### *Activity 1*

For a warm up activity, you can have the students collaborate online using Primary Wall.<sup>xxviii</sup> It is a great and easy-to-use tool that allows students to collaborate in real time. Students can brainstorm on this virtual wall ways to give blog compliments, or feedback. Alternatively, you can have them list what they think is the most important thing to remember when commenting on blogs and tips regarding opinion writing.

### *Activity 2*

Introduce verbs to students by having them watch a Learn Zillion mini lesson titled “Understand the function and use of verbs in sentences,”<sup>xxix</sup> or a YouTube video about verbs <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iEGqoKHrIM>. Then, show them how they can use a Thesaurus to find more colorful verbs (or adjectives) and vary their language.

### *Activity 3*

For your high achievers do an extra activity regarding transition words using the Balloon Toss activity, which represents a great means to review content for students who are

familiar with the content, to learn from each other, and to collaborate. You will need five to ten inflated balloons. The activity is most effective with tasks that do not require much writing; therefore, asking them to brainstorm and write down on balloons transition words works perfectly and fosters great excitement. Later, students can use those balloons as a support station for revising and editing their comments. You can ask them to talk about the three most important transition words listed, or circle them.

#### Day 6: Review and Practice

In order to have your students review the parts of speech they have studied in this unit have them write a Cinquain. A Cinquain is a poem that describes a noun.

Line 1) a noun (a one-word title)

Line 2) two adjectives (describing the noun in line 1)

Line 3) three “ing” participles (words that tell what the noun does such as jumping, singing, celebrating)

Line 4) a phrase about the noun

Line 5) another noun (synonym for the title)

Additionally, after they publish their Cinquain on their blogs, you can have them comment on each other’s poem (reference appendix 10 for a Cinquain sample and a graphic organizer).

#### Materials for Classroom Use

To implement this unit, beside conventional materials such as pencils, paper, and erasers, teachers would need desktop computers and/or tablets and access to internet. These resources will allow students to interact and publish online on a blog.

## Resources

### Bibliography for teachers

Arena Carla and Jefferson, Casa Thomas. "Blogging in the Language Classroom: It Doesn't "Simply Happen." *Test-Ej* 11, no. 4 (March 1, 2008): *ERIC*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 25, 2013)

The starting point of Arena and Jefferson's article is the analysis of the use of blogging in the classroom. They showed that students need rigorous guidance in order to learn how to use this technology tool skillfully for academic purposes.

Common Core State Standards. English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (2012). Accessed September 25, 2013. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W>

The Common Core State Standards represent the collection of educational standards, which are adopted by the majority of the states in the US. They claim to provide a clear path to college and carrier readiness.

Common Sense Media. "Digital Literacy and Citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Educating, Empowering, and Protecting America's Kids." (2009, June). Accessed Sept 25, 2013. <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/digital-literacy-and-citizenship21stcentury>

This article indicated that digital literacy and citizenship are skills that are essential to thriving in the 21st century. It delineated the importance of students being immersed in safe online environments.

Davis, Boyd and Thiede, Ralf. "Writing into Change. Style shifting in asynchronous electronic discourse". Edited by Mark Warschauer and Richard Kern in *Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 2000, 87.

This study examines what changes take place in ESL students' writing in online asynchronous environments. The authors highlight how the asynchronous writers accommodate to each other and adapt their style in asynchronous electronic discourses.

Dyrud, Marilyn A., Worley, Rebecca B., and Flatley, Marie E.. "Blogging for Enhanced Teaching and Learning." *Business Communication Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 77-80. *ERIC*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 25, 2013).

The authors of this article presented the advantages and disadvantages to using blogging in the classroom.

Hyerle, David. "Thinking Maps: Seeing is Understanding." *Educational Leadership* 53 no 4 (Dec 1995): 85, ProQuest. Accessed September 13, 2013.

This article delineates the importance of using thinking maps as tools to improve reading and writing, as well as critical thinking.

Hollandsworth, Randy, Dowdy, Lena and Donovan, Judy. "Digital Citizenship in K-12: It Takes a Village." *Techtrends: Linking Research And Practice To Improve Learning* 55, no. 4 (July 1, 2011): 37-47. *ERIC, EBSCOhost*. Accessed September 25, 2013.

This article emphasizes the importance of all educational players working together to raise digital citizenship awareness in order to ensure proper online conduct and healthy online interactions in the increasingly connected world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Kajder, Sara, Glen Bull, and Van Noy, Emily. "A Space for "Writing without Writing" Blogs in the Language Arts Classroom. Mining the Internet." *Learning & Leading With Technology* 31, no. 6 (March 1, 2004): 32-35. *ERIC, EBSCOhost*. Accessed September 25, 2013.

This article explains how the use of blogs can facilitate dynamic online communities. The author presents her experience with using blogs in the classroom.

Milman, Natalie B. "Crafting the "Right" Online Discussion Questions Using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a Framework," *Distance Learning* 6 No 4 (2009): 61-64, ProQuest. Accessed September 25, 2013.

This article presents an approach to creating high level thinking questions by using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a Framework.

Mishra, Punya and Koehler, Mishra. "Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge." *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), (2006): 1017-1054.

This article provides the theory behind the Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. TPACK is a conceptual framework for educational technology. Its authors argue that teachers need to master a particular type of knowledge found at the intersection of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and technology knowledge in order to be able to design meaningful and rigorous instruction.

National Center Education Statistics. "Use of the Internet by persons 3 years old and over, by type of use and selected characteristics of students and other users". 2003. Table 414. Washington, DC: Institute of Educational Sciences, 2005. Accessed September 25, 2013.  
[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07\\_414.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_414.asp)

This article provides a compilation of statistical information regarding the use of internet by students.

Prensky, Mark. "Digital natives, digital immigrants." Part 1, *On the Horizon*, 9(5), (2001): 1-6. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>

In this article, Prensky pointed out that digital natives are surrounded by digital media to such an extent that their very brain structures may be different from those of previous generations. This article is a reference article for my unit because it outlines the imperativeness of using 21<sup>st</sup> century tools with 21<sup>st</sup> century students.

Rogers, Spence. *Teaching for Excellence. Essential Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, and Processes for Ensuring Performance Excellence for All Kids* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) PEAK Learning Systems (2011).

This book presents a variety of instructional strategies and techniques for ensuring high quality teaching and learning. It also outlines the premises of this approach and points out research-supported practices to ensure academic success for all students.

Vogt, MaryEllen and Echevarria, Jana. *99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners With the SIOP Model* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) Addison-Wesley (2007).

This book offers research-based, SIOP tested techniques and ideas for lessons that include the eight SIOP components. It shows teachers what their classroom instruction should look like in order to ensure both second language acquisition and content development. It promotes interaction, and emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in the classroom. It can be used by all teachers, not just teachers working with second language learners.

Reading List for Students (optional)

Himmelman, John. *Ibis. A True Whale Story*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1990

Based on a true story, *Ibis. A True Whale Story* is an exciting account of rescue of a net-entangled humpback whale calf and eventually freed by people. The story is told from the whale's point of view. Ibis is a curious young humpback whale who loves starfish. At

first Ibis and her friend, Blizzard, are afraid of the boats that come to watch the whales, but they grow to enjoy the boats and people. An afterword explains the true story behind the book, and encourages children to think about the life of the whales that become entangled, most of them not as lucky as Ibis.

Marzolo, Jean. *Pierre the Penguin. A True Story*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2011.

Told in rhyme by noted I SPY author Jean Marzollo, this true story depicts an episode in a penguin's life. When Pierre, an African penguin living at the California Academy of Sciences, lost his feathers, heaters and medications fail to help him. Luckily, a biologist named Pam designs a wetsuit for him. Pierre recovers and his feathers grow back. This book can raise students' awareness regarding then importance of caring about endangered animals like the African Penguins. They can also see the penguins at the California Academy of Science live online [www.calacademy.org/webcams/penguins](http://www.calacademy.org/webcams/penguins) and learn about informational true stories.

Ryder, Joanne. *Panda Kindergarten*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2009.

This book describes the life of sixteen young giant panda cubs at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda at the Wolong Nature Preserve. The cubs are raised together from infancy in a protected setting. The cubs learn skills that will help prepare them to be released into the wild. Reading this book the students can learn about the importance of caring about threatened species like the giant pandas. They can compare and contrast baby pandas and children.

## **Implementing Common Core Standards**

**LA.2.W.1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.**

Throughout this unit, students will practice writing opinion pieces by commenting on blogs. They will learn how to express their opinion, how to support their opinion with clearly stated arguments, how to give constructive feedback and how to write concluding statements. They will also learn how to use transition words to link their ideas coherently.

**LA.2.W.6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.**

During the week of this unit's implementation, the students will use both traditional (pen and paper) and digital (computers, tablets) tools to produce and publish writing. They will pursue the conventions of the writing process following all the steps (pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing). They will get the chance to share their work and evaluate each other's writing.

**LA.2.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.**

In this unit the students will focus on using nouns, verbs and adjectives skillfully to improve their writing. They will also practice using punctuation correctly.

**L.A.2.L.4e. Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.**

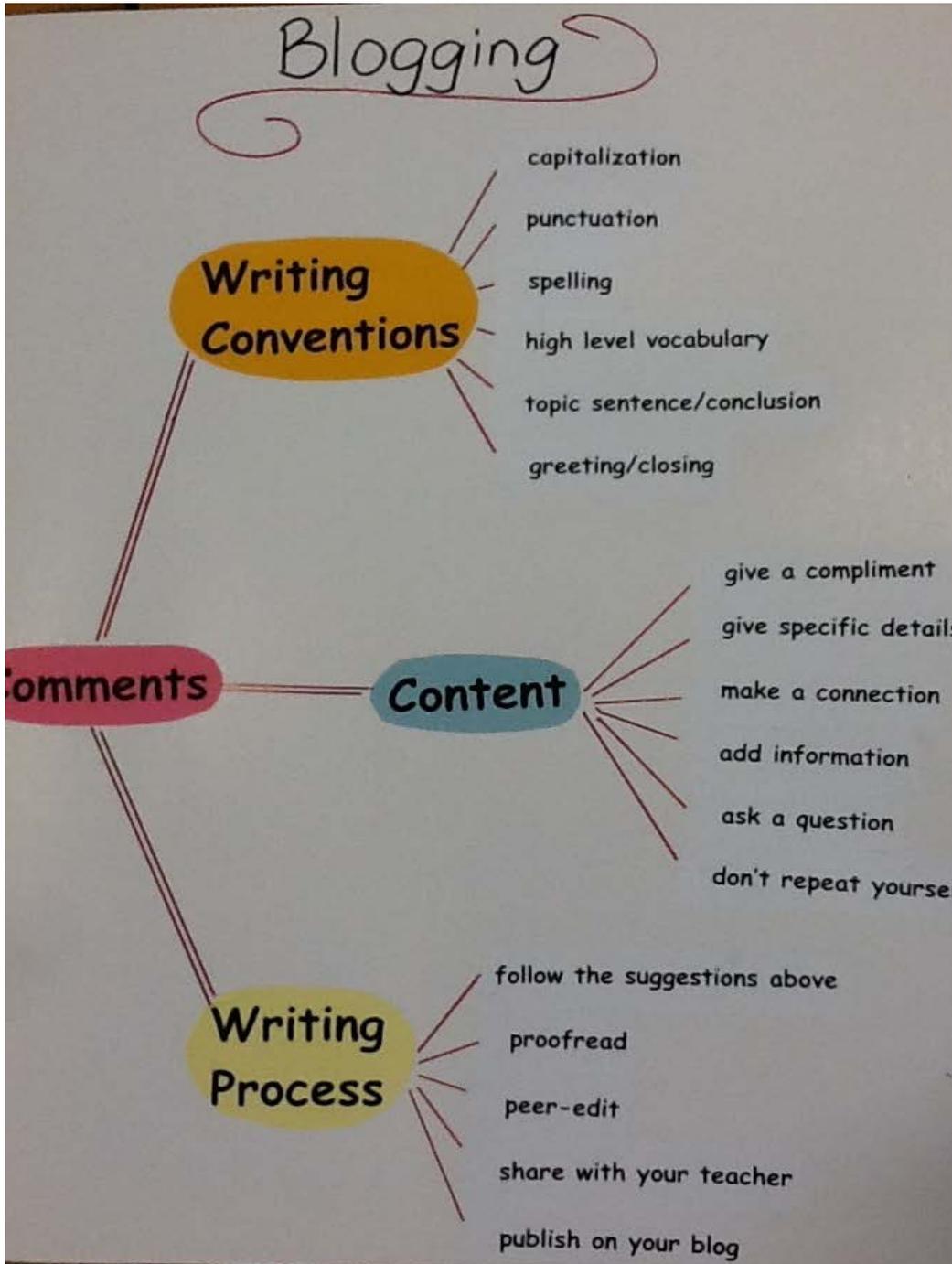
Adequate vocabulary development is extremely important. Vocabulary is a vital factor in the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and research shows that it is a good predictor of school achievement. The students will use glossaries and dictionaries both in print and online in order to improve their writing and enhance their vocabulary.

Appendix 2  
Online Safety Rules

ONLINE SAFETY RULES

1. Never share any personal information  
No last names. No email addresses. No home address.  
No school name. No phone numbers.
2. Never post a picture of yourself with  
your name.
3. Never share photos that could identify  
where you live or go to school.
4. Keep comments positive.
5. Never share your password or log in  
information with anyone.
6. All posts and comments will be  
reviewed by the teacher before being  
posted on the web.
7. Anyone who does not follow these rules  
will have their blogging privileges revoked.

Appendix 3  
Commenting Anchor Chart



## Appendix 4

### Fairy Tale Letter 2<sup>nd</sup> grade



**Task:** Letter writing

**Process:** Have you ever written a letter to your favorite story character? Here's your chance! First, what you need to do is decide **WHO** you want to write a letter to. Then, start writing your letter to your favorite character. You can explain to your character what you liked about what he or she did in the story, what you disliked, or what else you think he or she could have done differently. When you write

- Remember the parts of the letter
- Make sure to have complete sentences (punctuation)
- Explain **WHY** you like you character and be specific (give examples)
- Your letter should have at least 6 sentences
- Make sure to reread your letter to see if it makes sense

Student Rubric:

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Parts of a letter	Correctly used all parts of a letter	Omitted one part of a letter	Omitted two parts of a letter	Omitted more than two parts of a letter
Number of sentences	At least 6 sentences	Used 5 sentences	Used 4 sentences	Used less than 4 sentences
Sentence structure	Complete sentences with correct mechanics	Few incomplete sentences	Many incomplete sentences	Sentences are incomplete and missing mechanics

**Appendix 5**  
**Teacher Writing Rubric for Blog Post**  
**(Fairytale Character Letter Writing)**

2<sup>nd</sup> grade

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used one part of a letter.</li> <li>• Did not indent paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used two parts of a letter.</li> <li>• Did not indent paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used all parts of a letter.</li> <li>• Indented paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly used all parts of a letter.</li> <li>• Indented paragraph.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very few supporting sentences.</li> <li>• Few details.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few/some supporting sentences.</li> <li>• Details repeated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better details.</li> <li>• Some supporting sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great details.</li> <li>• Great supporting sentences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomplete and/or incorrect sentences.</li> <li>• Less than 4 sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many sentence mistakes.</li> <li>• Same kind of sentences.</li> <li>• Repeated sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentences are incomplete (errors don't impede comprehensibility)</li> <li>• 6 sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and correct sentences (7).</li> <li>• Precise vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many spelling mistakes.</li> <li>• Many mistakes with capital letters.</li> <li>• Many mistakes with punctuation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some spelling mistakes.</li> <li>• Some mistakes with capital letters.</li> <li>• Some mistakes with punctuation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few mistakes in spelling.</li> <li>• Few mistakes with capital letters.</li> <li>• Few mistakes with punctuation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NO MISTAKES</li> </ul>

**Appendix 6**  
**Bloom's Taxonomy Question Stems**

1. Knowledge	2. Comprehension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened after . . . ?</li> <li>• Who did . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you name the . . . ?</li> <li>• Describe what happened at . . . ?</li> <li>• When was . . . ?</li> <li>• Which is an example of . . . ?</li> <li>• Find the meaning of . . . ?</li> <li>• What is . . . ?</li> <li>• Which is true or false . . . ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you write a brief outline . . . ?</li> <li>• What do you think might happen next . . . ?</li> <li>• Who do you think . . . ?</li> <li>• What was the main idea . . . ?</li> <li>• Who was the main character . . . ?</li> <li>• What differences exist between . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you provide an example of what you mean . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you define . . . ?</li> </ul>
3. Application	4. Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you know another instance where . . . ?</li> <li>• How is . . . related to . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you group by characteristics such as . . . ?</li> <li>• What factors would you change if . . . ?</li> <li>• How would you use this information?</li> <li>• From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about . . . ?</li> <li>• What do you need to solve this problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence can you list for . . . ?</li> <li>• If . . . happened, what might the ending have been?</li> <li>• Which events could have happened . . . ?</li> <li>• What do you see as other possible outcomes?</li> <li>• What are the main ideas?</li> <li>• What can be concluded about?</li> <li>• Can you explain what must have happened when . . . ?</li> <li>• How is . . . similar to . . . ?</li> <li>• What were some of the motives behind . . . ?</li> <li>• What was the turning point in the story . . . ?</li> </ul>
5. Synthesis	6. Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you design a . . . to . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you compose a song about . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you see possible solutions to . . . ?</li> <li>• If you had access to all resources how would you deal with . . . ?</li> <li>• Why don't you devise your own way to deal with . . . ?</li> <li>• What would happen if . . . ?</li> <li>• How many ways can you . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you create new and unusual uses for . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you develop a proposal which would . . . ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your sources? How do you know they are credible?</li> <li>• Is there a better solution to . . . ?</li> <li>• Judge the value of . . . ?</li> <li>• Can you defend your position about . . . ?</li> <li>• Do you think . . . is a good or a bad thing and why?</li> <li>• How would you have handled . . . ?</li> <li>• What changes to . . . would you recommend?</li> <li>• How would you feel if . . . ?</li> <li>• Judge what would be the best way to . . . ?</li> <li>• What is your point of view about . . . ?</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 7**

### **Digital Citizenship Resources**

- Digital Citizenship resources compiled by Edutopia.org <http://bit.ly/1egkPO1>
- The website called Digital Citizenship where Mike Ribble lists various tools for digital citizenship [http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Home_Page.html)
- Educational Technology and Mobile Learning website  
<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/search/label/digital%20citizenship>
- or source:  
<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/05/10-excellent-digital-citizenship-tips.html>
- Watch a 7 min mini lesson on Digital Citizenship on Teaching Channel call Super Digital Citizen developed by Teaching Channel and Common Sense Media  
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-digital-citizenship>

**Appendix 8**  
**Two Stars and a Wish**

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Two things you learned!**



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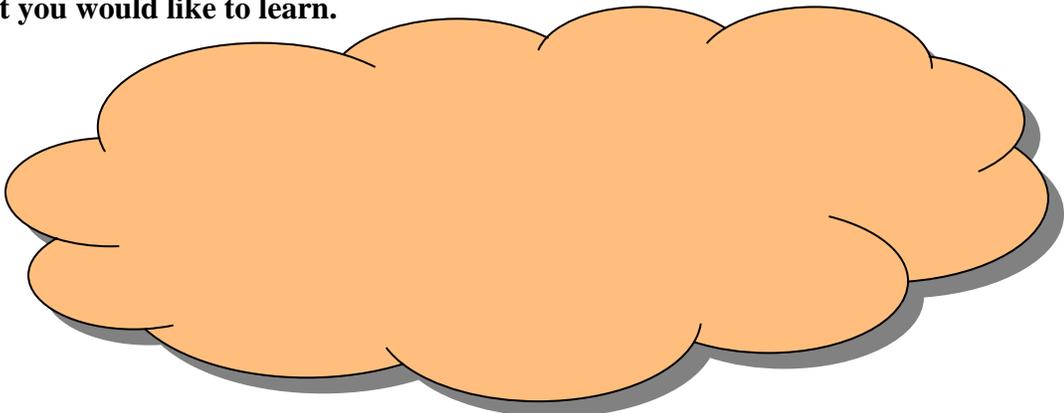
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**What you wish you learn next.**  
**What you would like to learn.**



Adapted from Rogers. *Teaching for Excellence. Essential Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, and Processes for Ensuring Performance Excellence for All Kids* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Peak Learning Systems (2011).

**Appendix 9**  
**Discussion Starters and Reflection Prompts**

Discussion Starters	Reflection Prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't know that...</li> <li>• Does anyone know...?</li> <li>• I figured out that...</li> <li>• I liked the part where...</li> <li>• I am still confused about...</li> <li>• This makes me think...</li> <li>• I agree with...because...</li> <li>• The reason I think....</li> <li>• I wonder why the author chose to...</li> <li>• I still do not understand...</li> <li>• I like the way the author developed the character by...</li> <li>• The author/You made the story really come alive by...</li> <li>• I found....interesting because....</li> <li>• I know something about this from....</li> <li>• I have read or heard about this when...</li> <li>• I'm not sure what this is about, but I think it may mean...</li> <li>• This part is tricky, but I think it means...</li> <li>• After rereading this part, I think it may mean...</li> <li>• What I understood about this reading so far is...</li> <li>• I can summarize this part by saying...</li> <li>• The main points of this blog post are...</li> <li>• We learned about this idea/concept when we studied...</li> <li>• This concept/idea is related to...</li> <li>• Two questions I have about this content are...</li> <li>• I understand this part, but I have a question about.../ I am wondering....</li> <li>• Three reasons why I liked reading this are....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What I did best today was ...</li> <li>• I was excited to learn that ...</li> <li>• The reason I'm learning this is ...</li> <li>• What I liked best about what I learned was ...</li> <li>• A question I have about what I'm learning is ...</li> <li>• Some ways I might be able to use what I'm learning are ...</li> <li>• My thinking has changed from ... to ...</li> <li>• If I did this again, I would ...</li> <li>• The best thing about my work is ...</li> <li>• I think what I'm learning is most like the color ... because ...</li> <li>• What I'm learning about is most like the animal ... because ...</li> <li>• What I'm learning is most like ... because ...</li> <li>• What I learned how to do today is ...</li> <li>• I could best show what I've learned by ...</li> <li>• If only ...</li> <li>• If ... knew this, ...</li> <li>• Three things I could do even better are ...</li> <li>• One thing I will do better is ...</li> <li>• One way I will use what I've learned is ...</li> <li>• One thing I can infer is ... because ...</li> <li>• One thing I can conclude ... because ...</li> <li>• I would predict that ...</li> </ul>

## Appendix 10 Cinquain Sample and Cinquain Organizer

### Cinquain Sample

*Classroom  
Happy, exciting  
Learning, growing, dreaming  
Where everyone feels loved  
Home.*

### Cinquain Organizer

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
a one word title, a noun that tells what your poem is about
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
two adjectives that describe what you're writing about
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
three -ing participles that describe what your poem is about
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
a phrase that tells more about what you're writing about
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
a synonym for your title, another noun that tells what your poem is about

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<sup>i</sup> National Center Education Statistics. "Use of the Internet by Persons 3 Years Old and Over, by Type of Use and Selected Characteristics of Students and Other Users". Table 414. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, (2005): 1.

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07\\_414.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_414.asp) (accessed September 25).

<sup>ii</sup> Randy Hollandsworth, Lena Dowdy, and Judy Donovan. "Digital Citizenship in K-12: It Takes a Village." *Techtrends: Linking Research And Practice To Improve Learning* 55, no. 4 (July 1, 2011), 39. *ERIC*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 25, 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> Sara Kajder, Bull Glen, and Emily Van Noy. "A Space for "Writing without Writing" Blogs in the Language Arts Classroom. Mining the Internet." *Learning & Leading With Technology* 31, no. 6 (March 1, 2004), 34. *ERIC*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 25, 2013).

<sup>iv</sup> Mark Prensky. "Digital natives, digital immigrants" Part 1, *On the Horizon*, 9(5), (2001): 1-6. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>

<sup>v</sup> Punya Mishra and Mishra Koehler. "Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge." *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), (2006): 1017-1054

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<sup>vi</sup> Randy Hollandsworth, Lena Dowdy, and Judy Donovan. "Digital Citizenship in K-12: It Takes a Village." *Tech Trends: Linking Research And Practice To Improve Learning* 55, no 4: 37-47 (July, 2011): 41.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>viii</sup> Common Sense Media. *Digital Literacy and Citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Educating, Empowering, and Protecting America's Kids* (June, 2009), 1, accessed September 25, 2013. <http://www.common Sense Media.org/digital-literacy-and-citizenship21stcentury>

<sup>ix</sup> Common Core State Standards. English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (2012), 19, accessed Sept 25, 2013. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W>

<sup>x</sup> Arena Carla and Casa Tomas Jefferson. "Blogging in the Language Classroom: It Doesn't "Simply Happen." *Tesl-Ej* 11, no. 4 (March 1, 2008), 2, *ERIC, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 25, 2013)

<sup>xi</sup> Marilyn A. Dyrud , Rebecca B. Worley, and Marie E. Flatley. "Blogging for Enhanced Teaching and Learning." *Business Communication Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2005), 77, *ERIC, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 25, 2013).

<sup>xii</sup> Boyd Davis and Ralf Thiede. "Writing into Change. Style shifting in asynchronous electronic discourse". Edited by Mark Warschauer and Richard Kern in *Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 2000, 87.

<sup>xiii</sup> MaryEllen Vogt and Jana Echevarria. *99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners With the SIOP Model* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) Addison-Wesley (2007), 1.

<sup>xiv</sup> Spence Rogers. *Teaching for Excellence. Essential Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, and Processes for Ensuring Performance Excellence for All Kids* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) PEAK Learning Systems (2011), v.

<sup>xv</sup> Arena Carla and Casa Jefferson. "Blogging in the Language Classroom: It Doesn't "Simply Happen," 1.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>xvii</sup> "Blogging in the Classroom". *Techie Teachers' Tricks* (accessed September 25, 2013).

<sup>xviii</sup> Natalie B. Milman. "Crafting the "Right" Online Discussion Questions Using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a Framework," *Distance Learning* 6 No 4 (2009): 61-64, ProQuest (accessed September 25, 2013), 63.

<sup>xix</sup> David Hyerle. "Thinking Maps: Seeing is Understanding." *Educational Leadership* 53 no 4 (Dec 1995): 85, ProQuest (accessed September 25, 2013).

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