

WRITING-IN-ROLE: A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

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As Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird says to his daughter Scout:

"First of all," he said to me, "if you can learn a single trick, Scout, you'll get along better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view--"

"Sir?"

"-- until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

Harper Lee

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CAPTURE THE EXCITEMENT--

THE NEXT BEST THING TO BEING THERE.

WRITING-IN-ROLE

now playing in classrooms around the world

experience for yourself
the freshness, the power
the authenticity of new
and improved writing

CHECK AND COMPARE

WHAT TEACHERS SAY:

"The kids don't groan anymore
when I have them write. They
really sense that there is a
purpose to what they write."

"Before I used to receive
more assignments than I
could process. With writing-
in-role students can write
more and get more feedback."

"We didn't even hear the
bell ring because we were
so involved."

WHAT STUDENTS SAY:

"It's fun!"

"It's better than all
those boring assignments
that I used to get."

"Last week I was an explorer
on the Fraser River. To-
morrow I'm going to be an
astronaut on a rocketship."

YOUR CLASS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

DON'T SETTLE FOR LESS.

CHAPTER ONE

WRITING-IN-ROLE: SOME QUESTIONS, SOME ANSWERS

What is purpose of this handbook? How can I use it?

This guide is based in the belief that writing-in-role is a rich and dynamic educational tool that provides students throughout the curriculum with meaningful and relevant experiences to create authentic pieces of writing.

Writing-In-Role: A Handbook for Teachers is the result of study and classroom work. It gratefully acknowledges and encourages the work, theories, and ideas of others. Although this is not a definitive resource, it does reflect at this time, the current stage of writing-in-role.

It is meant to serve as a starting point for those interested in this particular technique. This paper presents definitions, explanations, theories, methodology, as well as easy-to-use practical ideas for the classroom.

I've never heard of writing-in-role. What is it?

Writing-in-role is a drama technique in which students write from the perspective of another person. It is like stepping into someone else's shoes. Say, for example, that you and your students are involved in a unit about hearing. They've studied the terminology and the function of the anatomy of the ear; facts that the students can master through the use of models, diagrams, films, memorization, and testing. But

just imagine the quality of learning that could take place if these same students were asked to write a letter to a family member from the perspective of an elderly person who is experiencing a degenerative hearing loss or a medical report as a doctor documenting hearing restoration in a patient who has undergone surgery. There is no doubt that many of the students would gain a deeper understanding of the material in addition to a greater appreciation of the many sounds which fill our world. The authenticity in their voices as they write will be drawn from personal experience and knowledge, research, and teacher modeling and guidance.

Is there any specialized terminology that I should know?

It would be helpful to understand and know the terms that are mentioned more frequently in this guide. The following are some commonly used terms used in writing-in-role.

Writing-in-role: writing from another attitude or point of view

Teacher/Student-in-Role: the teacher/student takes on another attitude or point-of-view

Building Belief: techniques that help the students build a commitment to their roles

Framing: the choice of activity and perspective that the teacher selects that provides an entry into the work

Reflection: activities that provide opportunities for the students to become aware of their own thoughts and feelings

Tableaux: frozen pictures formed and held by the students for a short period of time. Their groupings, expressions, and positions within the tableaux create and represent meaning.

Protection: providing distance in terms of a role far removed from the student's own personal life in order to create a nonthreatening environment for the drama work.

Placement: the point prior to, during, or following the lesson when the writing-in-role occurs.

Format: the form the piece of writing-in-role takes such as a letter, diary entry, or newspaper report.

Language Mode: the language used by the students in their writings can be expressive (personal), poetic (artistic), or transactional (practical).

Unit: the number of students working on a particular piece of writing-in-role. Students can work individually, with a partner, or as a member of a group.

How did writing-in-role originate?

A British educator, Dorothy Heathcote, developed many techniques that are an integral aspect of drama-in-education, a teaching method that has found success throughout the world. She initiated this learning process so that children of all ages and abilities could gain a greater understanding of

themselves and the world in which they live. The children will be able, as Heathcote (1984) points out, "not only to see the world from their own viewpoint, but through the eyes of others" (p.85).

Drama? But I can't act!

You don't need to. In fact, acting is to be avoided. In drama-in-education, you don't need to walk or talk any differently than you normally would. You just need to imagine yourself in someone else's shoes, and assume his or her attitude.

Do you need to use drama in conjunction with writing-in-role?

Drama is an essential ingredient in helping students develop a deeper commitment to their roles and to their work. Drama activities can occur during prewriting suggest Lashmar and Booth (1987) in order to give students the opportunity to "explore, experiment, experience, and feel" (p.5). Drama can also take place naturally during the post-writing period as a means of sharing or an extension from what has been written. By participating in role herself, the teacher provides a model for the students and can help set the tone for work to follow.

If, for example, the students are to write-in-role as reporters, then the teacher can assume the role of the editor assigning pieces to her staff; or if the students have completed writing-in-role as lawyers who have collected the

facts from their clients, the students can then present their cases in a court of law where the teacher-in-role presides as the judge.

But I teach Socials--not Writing. Shouldn't this be something that the English teacher should be using to teach Composition?

Not at all. The study and use of our language is universal to all the subject areas. Writing-in-role is a flexible tool for integration across the grades and the curriculum since it is instrumental in developing speaking, reading, writing, and thinking skills. This seems to indicate that writing-in-role is at the very core of our educational system.

For example, we regularly see students practicing earthquake drills. The study, concern, and interest about earthquakes is not limited to one grade or subject area. Imagine students being able to research and/or apply their own knowledge in a meaningful context by writing-in-role.

Physical Education students could be paramedics from the Red Cross compiling a manual of First-Aid procedures for those injured in an earthquake; Mathematics students could allocate relief funds as city council members; a food/care kit could be designed by students in Home Economics writing as nutritionists; Social Studies students as police, newspaper reporters, or eyewitnesses could write accounts about earthquakes throughout history.

Through writing-in-role, students are actually making meaning for themselves in all subject areas.

Why use writing-in-role instead of regular writing methods for teaching writing? What can writing-in-role do that conventional instruction can't?

One of the strengths of writing-in-role is that it provides relevant contexts and meaningful situations for authentic writing.

Often teachers engage their students in textbook exercises designed to teach and develop writing skills. However, looking at the work of Tarlington (1985) we see that her students wrote easily because she writes, "the dramatic context supplied them with something to say and a purpose for saying it" (p.200). She noted that the quality of the writing was far superior to regular classroom writing as the students were motivated to write clearly and with authenticity.

In a dramatic context, students can learn, for example, about the various mechanics and forms of letterwriting through activities which would be far more intellectually and emotionally satisfying than textbook exercises.

What kinds of letters and to whom would students, in-role as soldiers, write the evening before an important battle knowing that the odds are against their survival? What kinds of letters would the government write and send to the families of the soldiers who had been seriously wounded or killed in this battle?

The students are challenged when real demands are made upon them. Options open up with the realization that there are a variety of possible approaches.

What forms of writing will students use/learn in writing-in-role?

Zemel and Daniels (1988) list the five types of writing that students encounter in the classroom. Students write to show learning, to learn writing, to communicate, to express self, and to create.

In writing-in-role, children are provided with these types of writing experiences. Students learning measurement in an Arithmetic class can apply their knowledge and demonstrate their grasp of the concept by designing, as Medieval architects, a castle. Mechanics of writing can be taught, rather than in separate drills and exercises, in a more personally significant context. History students studying warfare can write, in-role as leaders of the world, a draft of a new arms agreement. Documenting as scientists, the process as well as the results of a time-traveling experiment, can help the students develop clear observation and communication skills. A diary entry, written as elderly people in a rest home for senior citizens, can reveal how individuals feel as well as give the students an opportunity for personal reflection. As grieving parents, students can compose a creative piece of writing, such as a poem, to be engraved on

the headstone of their child's grave.

Students can effectively develop their writing skills through writing-in-role.

What modes of language will the students be using in writing-in-role?

Language is an instrument that we teach our students to play by helping them to learn all the tones and levels of language use. Our aim is to increase their choices by enlarging their boundaries. We can do that by providing meaningful and relevant contexts for language use. Writing-in-role provides those opportunities for students to actually use real language, not what Macrorie (1980) calls, "Engfish--the say-nothing, feel nothing, word wasting, pretentious language of the schools" (p.1).

Parry and Hornsby (1985) expand upon Britton's language model (1970) which differentiates between the three modes of language encountered in the classroom.

The core or central point of our language use is personal or expressive language. It tends to be loosely structured and free-flowing with the focus on the writer.

In one direction on Britton's linear model we find the transactional or practical language which interacts with the world in a very practical manner. The focus is primarily on the information or message to be conveyed.

We shift into poetic or artistic language, at the opposite end of this line, which is used for the expression of ideas.

Its focus is on language and its structure.

Zemelman and Daniels (1988) support Britton's model for the classroom and encourage teachers to work with their students by "accepting and celebrating their expressive language" and by "providing occasions that invite students to grow toward the transactional and the poetic" (p.74).

The opportunity to extend their language range is provided through writing-in-role. Imagine students reflecting about those household chores for which they are responsible although do not enjoy performing such as taking out the garbage, making their beds, taking the family dog out for walks on rainy days, or cleaning the toilet. Students can arrive at an imaginative solution by writing-in-role as inventors.

Recording in their diaries or journals, these inventors can describe their successes and failures in expressive language as they each strive to create an invention that will perform an undesirable task.

Sketching, planning, and outlining the invention will require the use of transactional language as will the writing of operating instructions for an owner's/user's manual.

In developing an advertising campaign for the invention, students writing-in-role will rely upon poetic language to name the invention, to create a sales slogan, and to design a magazine ad.

Can writing-in-role help student language development?

Writing-in-role provides occasions for students to practice using language for a wider variety of purposes than commonly found in the classroom. Their language can be effectively developed even though the focus is directed at the role's demands rather than the study of the language.

In writing-in-role, students are generally encouraged to select the role of an adult which automatically seems to elevate the tone and vocabulary of the writer as students search for the "voice" to fit the situation. Writing-in-role offers opportunities for students to go beyond themselves and to practice using their different voices, voices that they will be called upon to use outside of the school setting.

Recording log entries as a commander, whether naval, flight, or space, immediately elicits a specialized vocabulary from the students as they write-in-role. Their adventures and missions, while imaginative and filled with excitement and dilemma, also reflect the maturity of their post. Vocabulary, more appropriate to their work as well as time period, helps deepen their own belief in their work.

Writing-in-role should be central to a language curriculum--not a specialty nor an activity to be tagged onto the lesson as an extension. It is a more natural and creative teaching technique to help stimulate and increase language growth.

How does writing-in-role relate to the writing process?

Both writing-in-role and the writing process are effective learning mediums which are linked by their similar structures. Used in harmony, these complementary mediums can draw upon each other's strengths.

In the writing process, Parker (1982) outlines prewriting as the initial step. This involves the generating of ideas through such activities as discussion, brainstorming, reading, and freewriting. The drafting process provides the students with the opportunity to commit their ideas to paper as well as to organize and to shape them through decision making.

Once the piece of writing has been composed, editing and evaluation may then take place. This is commonly accomplished in small co-operative groups where peers critique each other's work. Benefits from this include relieving the teacher of trying to process more material than she can realistically and adequately handle. Students are given the opportunity to write for a broader audience and in turn, take responsibility for each other's work.

The final step in the writing process is the publishing of the final product. However, this is usually done by submitting the written piece to the teacher for evaluation. The teacher grades it according to various pre-determined criteria and then returns it to the students who may or may not reflect upon their work as well as the teacher's feedback. Whenever possible, the publishing may occur as posted classwork, stories

to be read aloud, or books to be shared in the library.

Writing-in-role runs a parallel course. Ideating, the process of creating ideas, precedes writing-in-role and introduces the students to the work which can be framed through similar types of activities that the writing process employs.

Teachers can guide the students next in the drafting stage by first helping them build belief in their roles. Neelands (1984) suggests a variety of dramatic modes such as games, tableaux, and interviews.

The editing process in writing-in-role is also usually performed co-operatively in small groups; however, it is presented in a contextual manner. The children may be editing a brief as businessmen preparing for an important meeting with a client.

Although not all writing-in-role will be shared, much of it will be presented as it has been developed as an authentic piece of writing, and as such, has a purpose to fulfill. A message that a student-in-role may write will only gain its full worth and impact if it is received and responded to by the person for whom it is intended.

What is reflection? How is it used in writing-in-role?

Teachers need to allow for reflection time throughout daily lessons in order for the students to become aware of their own thoughts and feelings regarding challenges presented in class. A careful pacing of the lesson will provide

opportunities for the student to reflect as Tarlington (1985) states "in different forms ranging from the personal and private to the more formal and public" (p.204). This reflection can occur in discussion as well as in writing-in-role.

Morgan and Saxton (1984) suggest a list of possible activities which provide occasions for student reflection through writing-in-role: "logbook, diary, casebook, letters, insert for a time capsule, first person story, reports, filling in forms, newspaper stories, treaties or formal statements" (p.134).

In a lesson where students are studying the many different aspects of immigration, the students may achieve insights through reflection in the form of writing-in-role. Filling in forms as hopeful or new immigrants or writing letters to family and friends left behind can give students the chance to gain a new perspective which will deepen how they think and feel about many different issues.

How will writing-in-role help students' thinking skills?

Writing-in-role challenges the students to actively develop and practice the creative and critical thinking skills of producing and evaluating ideas. These skills are essential in helping students to adapt to a growing and changing society filled with choices and new, as well as perhaps, different ideas.

It is this search for meaning that is at the heart of writing-in-role.

Ruggiero (1988) states that learning across the curriculum achieves its vitality by encouraging the students to hypothesize, interpret, raise questions, evaluate, and discover.

Students discussing the pros and cons of keeping killer whales in captivity will be challenged to review their thoughts when asked to write-in-role as captured astronauts who are allowed, by their captors on a distant planet, to write a letter home to a loved one. Issues that might have seemed simple become more complex.

The more students write, the better thinkers they become. Ruggiero (1988) stresses the importance of teaching students how to think by suggesting that teachers provide students with the "knowledge of the principles and techniques of creative and critical thinking" (p.5). These can then be applied in situations which encourage problem-solving and decision making. Writing-in-role creates those opportunities.

Is writing-in-role compatible with the whole language approach?

Froese (1989) provides a definition of whole language which demonstrates writing-in-role's compatibility with this teaching approach. He defines whole language as a "child-centred literature based approach to language teaching that immerses students in real communication situations" (p.2).

Writing-in-role supports the fundamental concepts of whole-language. It provides students with genuine purposes for the development of communication skills within integrated and relevant contexts. With an emphasis on process rather than product, students are encouraged to search for personal meaning in "real-life language situations," states Froese (p.8).

Students, in-role as curators, can design exhibits for a museum focusing on British Columbia's past, present, and future after reading in their history texts about the growth of communities and cities throughout the province. Labeled drawings with explanations, for example, of an old-fashioned telephone, a current cellular car phone or contemporary neon-lit model, and a futuristic design complete with a television screen, can be mounted for display on classroom/museum walls.

Butler (1989) states that in whole language, "children write to learn rather than learn to write" (p.94). This is a vital aim of writing-in-role.

Would writing-in-role be useful in second language learning?

Wessels (1987) stresses that "language acquisition... requires meaningful interaction in the target language--natural communication--in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding" (p.12).

Writing-in-role provides a wide range of opportunities for language growth through contextualized learning. Students gain

a sense of confidence and a readiness to use the language through relevant as well as creative practice.

The giving of directions can become more of a challenge when students practice this skill by writing-in-role as pirates with a treasure to bury. A detailed, illustrated map with clear directions can become a useful exercise, especially if the completed map is given to another group of "pirates" who try to follow the clues and discover the buried treasure.

In writing-in-role, is emphasis placed on the final product or the process?

Heathcote (1984) stresses the educational path that both students and teachers can travel along in process-centered learning; a road which places importance not solely upon content, but upon the insights that the students will discover about their topics as well as about themselves along the way. "True drama for discovery is not about ends; it is about journeys and not knowing how the journeys may end," writes Heathcote (p.98). Let us help the students to discover new meanings for themselves along this path.

This method of teaching helps breathe new life into stale methods where students plod through texts which provide material for the students to learn, seldom leaving room for the students' own searchings and discoveries.

Drama's writing-in-role places the child's learning in "as if" situations. Having the child write-in-role as an explorer, recording in his diary his observations and impressions of new

territories traveled through, gives deeper meaning to textbook facts.

Students take an active part in the learning process which helps them achieve greater understanding. By participating in their own learning, there will be a more profound impact.

I try to implement co-operative learning in my classroom. Can writing-in-role fit into this concept?

Co-operative learning is an integral component of writing-in-role. Since the activities are so interactive, much group work is organized so that students can share their ideas, test them, modify and build upon them.

Students can be found writing in desks, not arranged in long rows all facing the front where the teacher stands, but clustered in ways that promote co-operative learning.

Students working together in-role as animal experts while designing an exhibit for a captured Sasquatch need to share information and to plan together in co-operation . The group's results may vary ranging from modern, technologically sound exhibits to groups which have decided that these creatures should not be held captive but returned to their natural environment.

Through writing-in-role, students and teachers can work in co-operation in order to attain success and satisfaction for all. The wise teacher provides opportunities for this kind of sharing to take place.

How can a piece of writing be used?

There must be a real purpose in having a student create a piece of writing-in-role. To merely collect and grade the piece would be an injustice to both the student and the work.

Knowing that the piece is a vital ingredient in the work helps the student develop a commitment to the role and an authenticity in the writing.

The work does not necessarily need to be shared aloud in order for it to be validated. It could be the important change of plans or a set of new directions hidden beneath a stone that the weary travelers can't find. It could be the diary entry written by a prisoner as he absorbs the inhumane conditions of his cell in which he will spend the rest of his life.

There are those pieces of writing that are brought to life through an audience. A letter, written in role, could be that long awaited proposal to which another student-in-role could respond. The will, revised in the last moments before death, could be read aloud to the grieving family members.

Can writing-in-role be evaluated?

Evaluation of writing-in-role is possible if the teacher keeps in mind the purpose of the piece of writing and its intended audience.

But more importantly, it can be used to assess student comprehension. Heathcote (1984) stresses the diagnostic capabilities that drama possesses. "It can be readily used to

test what information people already possess, when assessing the next stages of instruction and can be an excellent guide for diagnosis of the conceptual maturity, as well as to reveal social sensitivity" (p.150).

Writing-in-role can be used to assess, for example, student comprehension of facts from newspaper articles during current events. Students can be asked to write-in-role as a person from within or related to the articles. Students could demonstrate their understanding in a non-threatening manner by relating the major facts from this point of view whether it be in a letter from the victim, a policeman's report of the accident, or an eyewitness report by an onlooker. Writing-in-role provides the student with opportunities to synthesize and develop personal interpretations of the facts leading to greater understanding and insight.

How do students react to writing-in-role?

Students respond in a very positive manner. There is a shift in the classroom from regarding the teacher as the holder of all the information to a learning environment which values the contributions and resources of the child. Byron (1986) reports that when the teacher is the sole source of authority in the classroom then the children become "cut off from their own self-motivated desire to learn" (p.118).

The wealth of experience and knowledge that the children bring with them to the classroom from their interactions with

the world is an integral aspect in writing-in-role. Children should be seen as Neelands (1984) points out not as "passive recipients but as active meaning makers" (p.2). Neelands goes on to encourage the teachers to give students the "opportunity to build...bridges between what they already know and the new learning presented by school" (p.2).

Asking a child to write-in-role as an architect and to design plans for a new school building is allowing the student to rely upon his own resources and experiences. The student may lack the formal educational background or technical skill for designing this project; however, the task is elevating the status of the child by valuing his own personal insights.

How often should I use writing-in-role with my students?

Since writing-in-role can be limited to a short writing activity or be extended to span the length of numerous lessons, it is necessary to assess both the purpose that the writing will serve as well as the needs of the students. However, it is important to note that for students to have success and to develop skills in writing of any kind, they must be given regular and substantial practice.

Is it difficult to learn how to use writing-in-role?

No, but like any new technique, learning to use writing-in-role with your students will take a little practice until you feel completely comfortable with it. However, beginning

gradually will help you and your students develop the confidence to make it a regular part of classwork. You will find the positive feedback and the pieces of writing from the students encouraging and helpful in planning your lessons.

Keep in mind two important reminders from Hollingsworth and Eastman (1988) Be aware that "writing is hard work. It requires us to think, to generate, to take risks, and to put something of ourselves down on paper for others to see" (p.47). Be sensitive to and considerate of your students' work. A second point is that "writing is not necessarily a quiet activity" (p.47). The noise level in your classroom can be an indication that thinking and communicating are taking place.

To assist teachers new to writing-in-role, outlines and practical suggestions are presented in this handbook for use and/or adaptation throughout the curriculum with all grade levels.

What books can I read to learn more about writing-in-role?

There are not many books that discuss writing-in-role in much depth; however, many educators clearly praise it and see its potential and strength.

Since teachers generally have limited time to pursue extra reading, the following six books are recommended. These will help provide an understanding of the theory behind writing-in-role as well as provide practical suggestions for its implementation in the classroom.

1) Teaching the Universe of Discourse--James Moffett

Moffett's work provides a solid basis for the theories behind the language in speech and writing.

2) Collected Writings on Education and Drama-- Dorothy Heathcote

This is an inspiring book that is filled with Heathcote's passion for learning and teaching.

3) Making Sense of Drama--Jonothan Neelands

Neelands provides a practical handbook filled with ideas for the classroom.

4) Drama in the English Classroom--Ken Byron

Although Byron bases his work in the English classroom, his ideas are easily adaptable.

5) Teaching Drama...A Mind of Many Wonders--Saxton and Morgan

Saxton and Morgan's easy-to-read and helpful text demonstrates the excitement of bring drama into the classroom.

6) Theory into Practice--TIP 1985

This collection of essays, written by experienced drama educators about a variety of aspects of drama, can be dipped into for ideas, theories, and practical suggestions.

How can I encourage members of my staff to try writing-in-role in their classrooms?

Sharing your experiences and ideas casually in the staffroom or more formally during department meetings will help motivate others on staff to try this technique. From there, you can arrange inter-class observations, team teaching, and professional development workshops from local experts.

Alright, class, get your homework book out. Please note that you need to write an essay for Monday.

- There's no time to tell us, the bell's going to ring in a minute.
- How many marks is this worth?
- When is this due?
- Mr. Woods is giving a guidance exam on Monday and I have to study all weekend for that.

It's to be a minimum of 500 words long.

- I can't even write a hundred words.
- How many marks is this worth?
- But you haven't handed back last week's assignment yet.
- Can I count the "the's" and the "and's"?

Discuss the development of the character of the protagonist in the novel and support your observations with quotations from the text.

- What is a protagonist?
- How many marks is this worth?
- I haven't finished the book yet so can I rent the video and write about it instead?
- My mom returned my textbook to the main library by accident and they won't give it back until I've paid all my overdue fines.

Be sure to write in pen and double space this essay. Marks will be deducted for tardiness.

- I can't do this assignment. I loaned my pen to Nick.
- How many marks is this worth?
- My computer is broken so I can't do the assignment until the repairman comes.
- That's not fair. Sometimes I can't help it if my work is late. Remember when my locker was jammed last term and I handed in my major paper late? You only gave me 4 out of 100 marks.

Are there any questions before the bell rings?

- Do you enjoy torturing us?
- How many marks is this worth?
- Mr. Rupert's class got to construct scenes from the novel in empty shoe boxes. Can we do that instead?
- Isn't that your car in space #14 in the teacher's parking lot? Is it well insured?

Class dismissed.

CHAPTER TWO

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Imagine the following lessons taking place in an English, Social Studies, and Science class.

"At the end of S.E.Hinton's novel, The Outsiders, we saw that the protagonist, Ponyboy, is permitted to remain with his brothers. Can his brothers provide the guidance he so clearly needs as well as a stable environment? Let's see if we can find some answers. These are casesheets that you, as social workers, psychologists, and guidance counsellors, will be completing in small groups. Using the text as a reference you need to supply the following information about your clients, Ponyboy and his brothers: name, age, family history, health, interests, and problems. At the bottom of the form you'll notice that there is a large space for your recommendations. These will be considered seriously by the family court in our final evaluation of the guardianship of this boy. We will be meeting in two days to discuss your findings."

"Last class we looked at Napoleon's later battles. As we've seen, his quest for power lead him through many military campaigns. But here it is, the final moments before dawn when the troops will begin to prepare for this very important battle. I wonder what Napoleon would have said to his men before the battle. Let's imagine that you are Napoleon. You've had a sleepless night since much has been on your mind. You

know that the troop's morale is low. You've lost many men since the beginning of this campaign and you'll lose many more in this battle but it's important that you speak to your soldiers before the battle. Write down the short speech that you will deliver to your men that will give them the strength that they will need."

"This is a recent article from an international magazine about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Sometimes it is difficult to get a clear picture of all that is happening there. This reporter was able to travel through many parts of the region and speak with many people. The Vancouver Sun wants to do its own coverage and that is why it is sending you, as reporters, for two weeks, on an assignment to the Amazon to document all that you see, hear, and experience in the Amazon. Keep a detailed journal as it will be published in daily installments in the newspaper. Let's start with a preliminary list on the blackboard of what supplies you think you'll need as well as your itinerary."

In each of these three lessons, writing activities in which students are challenged to delve more deeply into their subject areas, have been created. Careful preparation beforehand by the teacher as well as consideration of the following seven guidelines open up opportunities for the use of writing-in-role.

- (1) What are the lesson's objectives?
- (2) At what point in the lesson will the writing take place?
- (3) In what role(s) will the teacher and/or students be working?
- (4) What form will the piece of writing take?
- (5) In which language mode will the students be working?
- (6) In what unit(s) will the students be working?
- (7) Who will be the audience?

(1) What are the lesson's objectives?

Once the teacher has outlined the objectives of the lesson during the planning stage, she will need to assess whether and how the use of writing-in-role can help students achieve the lesson's goals.

In the lesson concluding the study of the novel, The Outsiders, a teacher might suggest that students should be able to (1) identify and record important facts from the text in order to support views and form the basis for the recommendations, (2) write a report using transactional language, and (3) work cooperatively in small groups.

While studying Napoleon and his later battles the teacher might expect her students to (1) identify qualities which contribute to effective leadership, and (2) write a speech using poetic language.

The teacher may establish, in the study of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, that the students should be able to

(1) list certain facts about the geography, animal and plant life of the region as well as its people, (2) identify issues involved in the destruction of the rainforest, and (3) express in writing, personal responses to the event.

Writing-in-role has the flexibility and the strength to be used effectively in helping students and teachers attain a wide variety of goals across the curriculum.

(2) At what point in the lesson will the writing take place?

It is important to consider the placement within the individual lesson or the extended unit when the writing-in-role will occur. The writing can be framed as an introduction to the work to promote student readiness and focus. To deepen understanding and commitment, students can write during the middle of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the writing can provide an opportunity for reflection or serve as a springboard for other related activities.

As a prelude to the lesson, students can be drawn into the reading of the article and the study of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest by first approaching the work as journalists themselves. By valuing the students prior knowledge and working from what they already know, the teacher will discover that writing-in-role can serve as an effective introduction to the topic.

Altering the pace during a lesson on Napoleon's battles to write-in-role as the military leader himself can allow students

reflection time to think about the responsibilities of being a commander and to consider the conditions of warfare at that time. By taking this opportunity to pause, the student can achieve and reveal a greater understanding in subsequent study.

To synthesize and apply what they have observed and learned about the characters in the novel, The Outsiders, the students can follow up their reading by filling in casesheets in-role about their clients which will be used in a hearing in a family court. Writing extensions following a lesson provide opportunities for student growth.

(3) In what role(s) will the teacher and/or students be working?

Working in-role can be, for both the teacher and the student, a unique as well as as enjoyable experience.

The teacher, in taking on a role shares the power and dynamics of the classroom experience with the students while still being able to maintain classroom management. Through a role such as the judge who presides over the courthearing concerning the characters in the novel, The Outsiders, the teacher can model language and behaviour. The teacher, in-role as an editor who assigns coverage of the destruction of the rainforest to her reporters, can help direct the students through a variety of activities. Taking on a helping role, such as a subordinate to Napoleon who suggests, "Sire, the troops are assembled now to hear you speak," the teacher is

still able to provide guidance while setting the tone.

The student, in taking on a role, gains insights into himself and into the subject matter that he is studying. His status is elevated from that of a student to that of someone with a vital part to play. Working as a social worker, psychologist, or guidance counsellor allows the child to gain fresh perspectives by being the giver, rather than the receiver, of care. Writing a speech as Napoleon provides the students with the opportunity to strip away the layers and reflect about the man, not just the emperor. Reporting as a journalist opens the student's eyes to important information and events while also creating situations for the student to convey that importance.

There is a great amount of flexibility in working in-role as one's role may change even within the classtime. Extensions of activities might find the student writing a diary entry as Ponyboy, the main character, after he learns about his home placement; penning a note to a loved one as a soldier on the evening before an important battle; or designing for the reporters, as a guide, a map showing routes through barely accessible regions of the Amazon rainforest.

(4) What form will the piece of writing take?

In order to help the students believe in and commit themselves to authentic writing, the teacher needs to provide varied, imaginative, and relevant writing opportunities whether

it be from charcoaled prehistoric pictographs etched on cave walls to futuristic interstellar communications engraved on laser discs to be sent out to distant galaxies.

The following list may be helpful to teachers in seeing the broad spectrum of writing activities from a core idea or kernel that can be expanded into a variety of extensions.

KERNEL

WRITTEN EXTENSION

Form

- job application
- accident report
- application for immigration
- dating agency
- membership (club, credit card)
- insurance (life, home)

Diagram

- directions on map
- house plan
- building design
- exploration route
- poster
- advertisement
- instructions
- as photograph
- as artwork

Documents

- certificate (birth, marriage)
- driver's license
- will
- awards
- ownership deeds
- court summons

Communications

- letters
- postcards
- notes
- cards
- invitations
- speeches
- autographs

KERNEL

Publications

Captain's Log

Personal writing

(past, present, future)

Memorial

Naming

Proposal

Report

WRITTEN EXTENSION

- headlines
- photograph captions
- pamphlets
- newspapers
- autographs

- space traveler
- ship captain
- train engineer
- pilot
- military/naval commander
- wagon train leader
- explorer

- calendar
- daybook
- datebook
- memoirs
- diary
- scrapbook

- tombstone
- commemorative plaque
- eulogy

- mountains and rivers by explorers
- roads and streets by urban designers
- inventions by inventors
- fashions by garment designers
- baby or pet by family members

- of marriage
- of agreement
- idea/plan

- teacher, counsellor, principal
- police, detective, eyewitness, victim
- newspaper reporter
- reviewer (movie, restaurant, gallery)
- physician (doctor, dentist, psychiatrist)
- historian/scientist

Writing-in-role without the proper tools would be like playing a sport without the necessary equipment. Xeroxed, typewritten casesheets for students-in-role as social workers, scraps of white parchment paper on which to hastily compose a speech as Napoleon, detailed coloured maps of the Amazon rainforest and bound notebooks for journalists to record their notes are essential ingredients necessary to help make the experience and the writing authentic for the students.

(5) In which language mode will the student be working?

Teachers need to give students meaningful and relevant opportunities to help them develop and extend their languaging skills. Students can gain confidence through the protection that writing-in-role offers.

Most often students are called upon to use transactional or practical language such as that which a student, writing-in-role as a social worker, would use in preparing a recommendation as to the guardianship of the protagonist of the novel.

By valuing their personal or expressive voice we encourage the students to reflect more upon their thoughts and feelings as they write in journals as reporters who witness and respond to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

Writing of a more poetic or artistic nature can occur as students-in-role as Napoleon write speeches designed to motivate and reassure their troops, learning as they do so, to

give shape to their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, through the beauty and the rhythms of language.

(6) In what unit(s) will the student be working?

Teachers need to consider the nature of the writing activity before determining what unit is best for the students in which to work--on an individual basis, with a partner, as a member of a small group, or as a part of the entire class.

Individual or independent writing ensures participation by all. It is an opportunity for the student to reflect and record thoughts and feelings. Students writing-in-role as Napoleon will arrive at varied and personal interpretations of his speech.

It is simple to facilitate work where students write with a partner as there is not a major shift in desks. Such work promotes an exchange of ideas and serves as a prelude for students to work in small groups. Group work encourages teamwork. Students working in groups of three and four, organized by the teacher or self-chosen, learn the language of co-operation as they write-in-role as social workers, psychologists, and guidance counsellors completing casesheets on their clients.

Students experience the dynamics of the group as they participate as a part of the entire class. Brainstorming a list of supplies and an itinerary on the blackboard as journalists may need the assistance of the teacher-in-role as

the editor to monitor and encourage suggestions from every member of the class.

(7) Who will be the audience?

An audience for writing done in-role can range from oneself, a partner, a small group, the class, an outsider, to the teacher but is an essential ingredient in the creation of authentic and meaningful writing.

Writing that is purely expressive and reflective may find greater freedom in the non-threatening audience of the self. Students can establish and commit themselves to roles through writing that is for their eyes only.

Presenting work to a partner is a low risk activity for those who are shy or reluctant to share in a large group. It is a natural progression to present, after that, work in small groups which serve well, in the writing process, as editing agents. Students writing-in-role as care-givers, would work co-operatively in formulating recommendations and testing ideas out on each other.

Work presented to the entire class becomes more theatrical in that it is performed for an audience and as a result carries much power. A simple speech, read by Napoleon to his troops, can carry great impact.

As there is no known or shared history working with an outsider, particularly an adult, students are less distracted from their roles. Visitors to the classroom can be used as

scribes to whom the children can dictate their work. The presence of this outside agent will help the children search for just the right words and creates writing opportunities for students who are limited in their own abilities.

Sharing writing with the teacher ensures the students' privacy. The teacher is able to assess the participation and understanding presented by each student. To avoid trying to process far too many papers or grading work, the teacher can return a letter from a captured soldier, censored rather than marked or examine the itinerary of a journalist going to the Amazon stamping "Approved" on it.

The following chart based on the three sample lessons might be useful in identifying clearly the various aspects that are a part of writing-in-role. In planning effective lessons, careful consideration of the seven questions could serve as guidelines.

Lesson:	Novel study-- <u>The Outsiders</u>
Objectives:	To identify and record important facts from the story to support views To write a report using transactional language To work co-operatively in small groups
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Representative of the courts/Judge
Students-in-Role:	Social workers, psychologists, counsellors
Format:	Casesheet
Language Mode:	Transactional
Unit:	Small group
Audience:	Small group/Class

Lesson:	Napoleon's battles and leadership qualities
Objectives:	To identify qualities that lead to effective leadership To write a speech using poetic language
Placement:	During the lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Subordinate to Napoleon
Students-in-Role:	Napoleon/Napoleon's troops
Format:	Speech
Language Mode:	Poetic
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Class

Lesson:	Study of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest
Objectives:	To list certain facts about the geography, animal, and plant life of the region as well as its people To identify issues involved in the destruction of the rainforest To express in personal writings responses to this event
Placement:	Pre-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Newspaper editor
Students-in-Role:	Reporters
Format:	List/Journal
Language Mode:	Transactional/Expressive
Unit:	Class/Individual
Audience:	Class/Teacher

I'd like to discuss this "D" with you, Miss Matthews. I don't understand why I got such a low grade on this paper.

What do you mean? Of course I listened to your instructions, Miss Matthews, but whatever happened to artistic freedom? You're stifling my creativity.

Here, let me read this sentence to you that you underlined in red pen. I think you are missing the point here. "He lurched toward the VCR and spewed up chunks of bologna." No, you don't understand. This isn't tasteless vulgarity, Miss Matthews. His actions represent his total rejection of material possessions in his life.

Too short? Yes, I know that the composition is three pages long but I felt that this was just the right spot to end the story. That way I could leave the reader wondering what would happen next. Yes, you felt confused? Great, that was my intention.

What about my language? Miss Matthews, all the great writers use these words. It's hardly fair that they can use these words and make millions of dollars and I can't use them in a story. Sounds like double standards to me.

Look, I've got to run right now. My socials teacher doesn't like me and gave me a "C-" on my essay on "Anarchy Today." He said that I could come and talk with him after school. So, could you look at it again, Miss Matthews?

CHAPTER THREE

SAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

For one hour the Grade 11 and 12 students in my Composition 11 classes directed their attentions towards a somewhat mundane but nonetheless universal concern--their teeth. They examined certain issues, emotions, and problems involved in this topic by writing-in-role from a variety of points-of-view.

Following an introductory discussion on teeth the students posed as inexperienced parents writing a letter to a family member. In these pieces they shared their experiences, concerns, and feelings.

One student wrote, "Dear Mom, it's 1:30 in the morning and I'm up because Molly just got her first tooth coming in. She's been biting at things for a while and just a few minutes ago I heard a loud scream. I went into her room and she wouldn't stop crying. (Thank God for Or-Gel!) I can appreciate how you must have felt with me, and this letter must bring back some fond memories."

Students then exchanged letters with a partner and after reading the letters, responded as if they were those family members.

The maternal reply was, "Dear Phyllis, you my dear were most likely just as noisy as darling Molly. You screamed and threw things and at that time there were no specialized "Or-

gel" soothers. So I lost quite a bit of sleep on you too. I know it's a tiring experience but wait until you become a grandmother. Then you will know that those horrible hours you spent with her were appreciated and that you were a good mother. With all my love--give a kiss to Molly for me. Your Mom."

Later, at a meeting for parents, students-in-role continued their sharing orally.

Stepping back from the drama, students revealed that they liked "getting more realistic answers and comments" as well as that "it was good to share your work with others and let the others reply to you."

Memories of losing their teeth was the subject of another discussion. In-role as this same child four years later, students scribbled notes to the toothfairy with whimsically misspelled suggestions and childlike script.

"Dear toofairy, do you like my tooth? I like chokalit (for my tooth)," scrawled one. Another favoured the direct approach. "My tooth is gong. Put the money under my pillow."

What specialized language do dentists utilize? We brainstormed a list of technical terms overheard as patients and attempted to define them. As dentists, students recorded information for their files after a checkup of this child's teeth a few years later.

One student enigmatically noted, "Observed 3 fillings on upper B7--D 10 molars. Come in for alternate check up in two weeks on crack on incisor D 12 and fill cavities the following week."

The agony of adolescence, when many children are subjected to the tortures of braces, head gear, and retainers, emerged. Many of the students had had first hand experience with these horrors so their journal entries as this same child as a teenager, resounded with bitter experience. Those that had escaped demonstrated empathy.

"Dear Diary," wrote this same child, now into the teenaged years, "two weeks ago I found out I needed braces--well today they came. No, seriously, I got them on today. I HATE THEM!!! I look so ugly, when I go to school, if I go to school I won't smile, I promise. I'll never let anyone see them. Besides the appearance, the discomfort is awful. I never knew they'd hurt so much. My mouth feels sore and it feels as if this metal is moving all my teeth! Only 2 yrs, 27 days to go!"

Their final written pieces took a quantum leap in years to the acquisition of dentures in their old age. This child had come full circle; the final set of teeth had been lost. Their sensitive letters to friends reflected a wisdom resulting from the maturity of their advanced years.

One wrote, "I thought we had changed so little over the years, however now my last teeth are gone and I feel nothing

but remorse. It's strange how all the small things matter so much as we grow older."

Another was able to see the more positive aspect and reflected that, "while I don't like being faced with my own mortality I do enjoy the improved looks my dentures bring. They are useful but annoying when remembering my youth."

Looking back on their writing for that class, many of the students found it to be a positive experience, a welcome relief from the assignments in their textbook, and a way of bringing truth to their writing.

One student observed, "It made for more spontaneous writing. It allowed you to write from different people's point-of-view and in different writing styles."

Another added, "The final output was genuine."

Oh no, the film I ordered still hasn't come in and I've got a splitting headache from the Grade 8's. I need a quiet period now. I think I'll give this class an in-class essay to write today and postpone the review until next period. That will give me the chance to finish marking those tests and to write a few more interim reports. Let me see, pollution is a good topic. They can write about that oil spill off the coast or maybe about the destruction of the ozone layer--that should keep them writing for the whole hour.

Oh no, not another surprise in-class essay! Why do we have to be punished every time the Grade 8's give him a hard time? And not pollution again! I can't write, let alone finish, a good paper in an hour. It takes me an hour just to get my thoughts together. Look at him. I can't even ask him for help. He's too busy. This is going to lower my average for the term. My parents are going to kill me. There go my TV privileges.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHY USE WRITING-IN-ROLE?

Why use writing-in-role? Because it works. As a teacher I have become increasingly aware of the value of using this technique in my classroom. The students' work has gained a truthfulness and demonstrated language development through placing their learning experiences in fresh and relevant contexts and by providing a sense of audience.

It is important to consider the many objectives achieved through the implementation of such a method in the classroom. Writing-in-role can:

- (a) bring a freshness to routine exercises
- (b) reflect student comprehension and retention of facts
- (c) demonstrate student ability to write in various styles
- (d) elevate language while developing vocabulary and sentence structure
- (e) supplement the curriculum through relevant contexts
- (f) provide a sense of audience
- (g) slow the pace of the drama down for reflection
- (h) commit students to role and build their belief in their roles and situation
- (i) relieve the pressures of oral participation
- (j) develop student's abilities to concentrate
- (k) provide an outlet for concerns and emotions
- (l) assist students in developing more confidence

These objectives were demonstrated repeatedly in classwork. In journal writing, writing-in-role offered students an opportunity for more challenging writing. Often journal writing, which is meant to be an activity for stimulating creativity as well as an outlet for reflection upon their own experiences and feelings, becomes a tedious chore.

To initiate the writing-in-role, students at first brainstormed on the blackboard a list of individuals who might keep records or make regular entries in a journal. The list included such people as commanders, prisoners, mothers, soldiers, and travelers. Students then selected the role of one of the people and developed this character by writing-in-role in journal entries every day. Topics for writing progressed from an introductory entry which detailed their new identity and supplied much background information to journal entries that asked the students to recount a typical day in their lives or to reflect on changes in the lives.

One volatile sixteen year old girl who had only recently recovered from a miscarriage wrote in-role as a mother of two children. "Before he was born I got into a traffic accident and he was retarded, had seizyers and having attecks all the time. I think about Tony Jr. I know he's getting the best care but I wish I could give him that here. It hurts to have sent him away." Writing-in-role as a mother provided a protected opportunity for the girl to work through and examine

her feelings about a traumatic experience in a analogous situation.

Another student, a seventeen year old boy whose reputation as a comedian made it difficult initially for him to believe in his role as a soldier wrote, "I miss the sweet kissing lips of my girl Thelma Lew and my ma's cooking but I don't miss the work on the farm. Oh ya I allso miss my pitbull Loco." However, when contemplating what he didn't like about being a soldier he wrote, "The thing that bothers me the most is who are we fighting and what are we fighting for I probably go crazy before I get shot cause all we do is move 20 feet and wait to see if we can here anything or dig foxhole it's so useless out here." The pressure to perform for his peer group was relieved for this boy as he began to become more committed to his role.

It was noted that the students worked independently without the usual interruptions that reflect a lack of concentration as well as for longer periods of time. Some students researched on their own initiative historical background information for their entries.

In Social Studies writing-in-role became an integral part of the classwork. While studying Spanish festivals, the annual tradition of the running of the bulls in Pamplona was discussed in class. With the aid of photographs, students learned that this footrace between men and loosened bulls on their journey to the arena was not without some risk. Writing-in-role was

used to probe more deeply into the issues raised by the students concerning the perpetuation of this event.

Students at first identified groups of people who would support this tradition such as cattle owners and those in the hospitality field whose businesses thrived as a result of the running of the bulls. They also listed citizens who believed in upholding traditions that had been passed down through the generations. Another list was brainstormed which reflected the concerns of those opposed to this event. These people included family members as well as friends who had lost a loved one, participants who had been injured themselves during the event, and animal conservationists who considered this a cruel and inhumane sport.

After selecting an identity, students-in-role then wrote letters to the Mayor of Pamplona voicing their concerns. One business-minded fifteen year old boy wrote in support of this custom. "My name is Mr. Martinez and I'm a cattle owner. Bull fighting is really good to me. I hope bull-fight will be kept for years to come. Annually I sell ten big-beefy bulls to the arena. At the arena I see the thing my ancestors started and it should be on forever from generation to the next."

Another student, a sixteen year old girl who was experiencing family problems at home, analogously wrote, "I am only one of the families that live here in Pamplona, but this outrage has broken up my family nothing will ever be the same

and that's why I think this should be stopped before other families become like mine."

Writing-in-role provided a less threatening method of evaluating student comprehension. In presenting major facts reflecting what they had learned from the film Gandhi, students were provided with a context that would offer a more personally relevant meaning for the students. Each was to write a first-person account from the perspective of someone who had met Gandhi or had been affected by his achievements.

One very quiet fifteen year old girl wrote, "I met Gandhi when he was walking down to the ocean to make salt. I walked behind him most of the way and he talked to me awhile. When I heard about his death I felt like we had no leader. It was like he had put us on the right path. He accomplished so much by protesting without violence and taking in so much pain. I felt he did our country good by making the British leave, us having our own rights and being independent. A big thing that I was so thankful for was bringing the Muslims and Hindus together once again."

These samples of student work demonstrate how writing-in-role can be effectively used in a variety of teaching situations.

For the student, it can promote greater understanding, encourage confidence building, relieve pressures associated with oral participation, develop concentration, elevate language usage, and stimulate the expression of feelings. For

the teacher, writing-in-role can serve as a method of student assessment, rejuvenate classwork, teach writing styles, add new dimensions to the curriculum, provide purpose to the lesson, and encourage student reflection and role development.

Department Meeting

Characters

Mr. Jack Tupper: English department head

Miss Reid: due to retire at the end of the year

Dave McKay: first year teacher

Kevin Sands: teaches 6 blocks of PE, 1 block of English

Mrs. Blanca: veteran teacher with twenty years of experience

Tupper: As you know, you will only have to mark the essay at the end of the examination as the computer cards from the objective sections will be fed through right after the examination. I've asked you to take a look at these 5 sample compositions and give them a mark out of 20. What we're trying to do is get some consistency across the grade in our marking.

Sands: Sorry I'm late. I had gym supervision and Sam Blackman sprained a couple of fingers while playing basketball.

Blanca: That doesn't surprise me. He always finds ways to avoid submitting his work on time. Now he'll have an excuse to hand in yet another essay late.

Tupper: No problem, Kevin. But let's get this meeting going. We've got 5 pieces to get through.

Reid: And it's 3:30 already.

Tupper: Let's take a look at Sample #1. Miss Reid, what did you give this piece.

Reid: Well, Jack, the student did make a number of spelling errors. He spelled "curious, magnetic, and conscientious" incorrectly. He also forgot to capitalize words at the beginning of some of his sentences. He also forgot to use a semicolon in the last sentence of his first paragraph. But he had a good opening line and his closing remarks seemed to have punch. He did, however, seem to get a little lost in the middle. I gave this piece 13 out of 20.

Blanca: I wasn't as generous as you, Miss Reid. The boy's sentence structure is simply appalling. If you notice there is also a weakness in his paragraph construction. It's clear that English is not this student's first language. The most I could give him would be a 9.

Tupper: Thank you, Julie. Well, Dave, how do you feel about this piece?

McKay: Well, Mr. Tupper, I can certainly see that both Miss Reid and Mrs. Blanca have valid concerns about the boy's weaknesses in his basic skills. But apart from these errors, the boy really showed insight into his topic. I gave him 17 out of 20.

Blanca: Seventeen! Stop being so softhearted. If the boy is not in a special class for newcomers to the country then he must be evaluated in the same way as the others. The boy can barely write English!

McKay: But his ideas are sound.

Sands: Look, I'd like to stay but I've got to go back to the gym and check on the senior girls volleyball game.

Tupper: I understand, Kevin. Our next meeting will be at the usual time. See you then. Well, it looks as if we have quite a discrepancy in the marks here: 13, 9, and 17.

Reid: How about if we compromise and give him a 10?

Tupper: Maybe we should leave this piece and try Sample #2. Miss Reid, What did you give this piece?

CHAPTER FIVE

LESSON PLANS

In order to demonstrate how writing-in-role can be integrated into various levels and subject areas across the curriculum, the following lesson plans have been developed.

These lessons are intended as starting points for teachers interested in learning how to incorporate writing-in-role as a teaching technique and learning agent in their classrooms.

Suggestions for activities and extensions for future development are certainly flexible and adaptable to suit the needs and interests of the students, the demands of the curriculum, and the limitations of time and space.

Each lesson can stand alone or be linked with other activities or materials in order to become a part of an extended unit spanning a number of lessons.

STOLEN JEWELS

English as an Additional Language

Can we place learning for students of English as an Additional Language in challenging contexts? Writing-in-role creates opportunities for students to learn and to practice direction giving.

LEVEL: intermediate language skills

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students need to learn vocabulary for giving and following directions (right, left, forward, straight, etc.).
- Students, working in pairs, explain how to get from the school to their homes.
- In pairs, students play "Blind Tag." "A" is blindfolded and must rely on "B's" directions to avoid being caught by the couple that is "It."

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as leader of thieves says, "OK you guys, our heist of the jewels last night was a success and as your leader it's up to me to decide what to do now. We'll divide up the loot equally and hide each piece of jewelry somewhere in a school. No one will ever think of looking there for it. You'll each make up a map with instructions and in five years those of us who haven't been caught will come back and find all the jewels. Where shall we keep all the maps?"
- After determining the hiding place for the maps, the students-in-role create a map and instructions with a partner.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- In-role, students working in pairs, exchange maps with other teams and attempt to find a jewel from the robbery.

Lesson:	English as an Additional Language
Objectives:	To use and understand directions
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Leader of the thieves
Students-in-Role:	Thieves
Format:	Map with instructions
Language Mode:	Transactional
Unit:	Partners
Audience:	Partners

EXTENSIONS

- Students can assist at parent/teacher interviews by helping to give parents directions to the rooms.
- Students can design a handbook for new students or substitute teachers so that newcomers can find their way around the school.

WINNERS AND LOSERS

Physical Education

It's not whether you win or lose the game--it's how you play it. Or is it? Do students believe this? How far will people go in order to win? Physical Education students can use writing-in-role to analyze the pressures of winning and losing.

LEVEL: Grade 7-10

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Play a game where there is a winning team and a losing team.
- Play a co-operative game where the players must all work together.
- Discuss differences between the games as well as how it felt to win and to lose.
- Students pose in tableaux (frozen pictures) which depict moments of victory or defeat in particular sports.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role says, "As a member of the Athletic Disciplinary Board of Canada I am here to prepare you for your appearance before the committee concerning your infraction of the rules. Your hearing will be to determine what, if any, disciplinary measures are to be taken. You will need to write a letter explaining your actions which you will need to present to the board.
- Students write-in-role as athletes who have committed some type of infraction (e.g. swearing on the tennis court, assaulting a referee, using performance enhancing drugs).

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- In order that all students are provided with the opportunity to work in-role as athletes and as members of the disciplinary board, small groups should rotate to give everyone the chance to experience both perspectives.

Lesson:	Physical Education
Objectives:	To stress co-operation To understand consequences of actions
Placement:	Pre-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Member of Disciplinary Board
Students-in-Role:	Athletes/Menmbers of Board
Format:	Letter
Language Mode:	Transactional
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Small groups

EXTENSIONS

- Students could assist with disciplinary actions in their own school.
- Students could organize and lead co-operative games for young children.

THE MENU, PLEASE

Food and Nutrition

How do menus assist and influence diners in their choices of meals? From fast food chains to gourmet restaurants, diners are presented with menus to inform, persuade, or entertain them.

LEVEL: Grade 8-12

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Menus from sample restaurants could be analyzed according to accurate and enticing language (focus on adjectives, adverbs, and verbs).
- Students plan and prepare for a guest a luncheon meal to be presented at school.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role says, "As one of the co-owners of this hotel I have been delighted and impressed with the fine meals I have eaten in each of the five dining spots in this hotel prepared by you, the finest chefs in the city. However, I think the menus could use some updating and who would know better than you how to make these wonderful meals appealing on a menu. I'd like to see you design a new menu cover and in your descriptions of each meal show how unique and delicious each dish is."
- Students, in-role as chefs, work in their cooking groups to create a special menu for their luncheons.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Students present their guest with a luncheon menu prior to the meal.

Lesson:	Food and Nutrition
Objectives:	To practice using descriptive language To describe food effectively
Placement:	During the lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Co-owner of hotel
Students-in-Role:	Chefs
Format:	Menu
Language Mode:	Poetic
Unit:	Small groups
Audience:	Guest

EXTENSIONS

- Students could write menus for food being served in the school cafeteria.
- Students could work on a fund-raising project by writing up the staff's and students' favourite recipes to be included in a school cookbook.

THE WALL

Social Studies

Do walls keep people in or out? What has been the significance of the Berlin Wall? How has its construction and dismantling affected people? An event, whose effects will not be known for some time to come, presents challenging issues for exploration through writing-in-role.

LEVEL: Grade 10-12

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Study of the Berlin Wall can occur through text and film.
- With the help of the teacher, students can brainstorm a list on the blackboard of those affected by the construction and dismantling of the Berlin Wall.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as a media representative says, "I'm Kim Jamison. Thank you for coming to this meeting. I'm a representative from Life Magazine which has been planning on producing a special issue featuring the Berlin Wall. It is to include photographs, personal reflections, and recollections as well as articles about this infamous wall. You have been asked and chosen to participate due to your own personal experiences. Could you write for us a short account that we could include in our publication? It should be based on your thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a result of the Wall."
- Students write-in-role from any perspective about themselves and their relationship with the Wall (e.g. someone

who has lost a family member who was shot trying to escape over it from East Germany, a businessman in the United States who is selling chunks of the Wall as a money-making venture).

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- The writing could be shared with others.
- Pieces can be read aloud while students form a frozen picture as a photograph to be included with the writing.
- Students can submit work to the teacher in order to assess student comprehension of the material.

Lesson:	Social Studies
Objectives:	To know the facts and understand the significance of the Wall
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Representative from <u>Life Magazine</u>
Students-in-Role:	People affected by the Wall
Format:	Personal
Language Mode:	Expressive
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Small groups, class, or teacher

EXTENSIONS

- The class could study other famous walls (The Wailing Wall, the Walls of Jericho, The Great Wall of China, The Wall: a memorial to those killed in Vietnam).

ON THE AIR

English

How can one best persuade the consumer through radio ads? What type of language is most effective? By studying and producing a radio commercial, students can gain a deeper understanding of this powerful medium.

LEVEL: Grade 6-10

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students study poetic devices (e.g. similes, metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification) through exercises and analysis of literature.
- Students listen to taped radio ads to determine effective ideas and identify poetic devices.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role says, "As the producer of S.U.N. Radio Station, I've chosen this advertising agency to handle our accounts. We need some exciting, innovative approaches in our radio ads not only for our station but for our sponsors as well."
- Students working in-role as members of an advertising agency write one minute commercials in small groups.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Commercials can either be presented live or taped for playback.

Lesson:	English
Objectives:	To identify and use poetic devices To write and tape a radio commercial
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Radio station producer
Students-in-Role:	Members of Advertising Agency/ Actors in commercial
Format:	Radio commercial
Language Mode:	Poetic
Unit:	Small groups
Audience:	Class

EXTENSIONS

- Students can produce radio ads to be broadcasted on the school's PA system to advertise school events.
- Students can design and draw ads for magazines.
- Video-taped commercials can be scripted, performed, and then taped.

THE TELEPHONE

Theatre

What language cues do we receive and send through our conversations on the telephone? Students can develop script writing skills through the construction of missing pieces of dialogues as criminologists.

LEVEL: Grade 9-12

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students play " Telephone Game." Students must try to keep a one-sided conversation going as the students pass a telephone around the circle, each adding a sentence at a time.
- Students improvise situations from the following opening lines: (1) "It's him/her again." (2) "I've told you not to call anymore." (3) "Aunt Bertha, what a surprise to hear your voice." (4) "Who is this?"

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as detective says, "Good day, I'm Lieutenant Thursday with the Communications Analysis Department of the V.P.D. We need help in cracking open a murder case--that's why we've come to the Criminology Department of this university to ask for your assistance. We only have one side of a taped conversation to go on in this case. We need you to listen carefully to the content of the conversation, tone of voice, speech patterns, and length of pauses in order to recreate potential dialogues between the two speakers. Let's listen carefully now."

- Students working in pairs write-in-role a potential script.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- A reading or taped reading of the conversation can then be presented.
- Students-in-role as criminologists can assess the different conversations.

Lesson:	Theatre
Objectives:	To learn script writing To analyze conversations for speaking cues and speech patterns
Placement:	During lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Lieutenant from Police Department
Students-in-Role:	Criminologists
Format:	Script
Language Mode:	Expressive, transactional, poetic
Unit:	Partners
Audience:	Class

EXTENSIONS

- Students can write creative messages for telephone answering machines (e.g. for Queen Elizabeth, for Batman).

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT DATING*

***But were afraid to ask.**

What do teenagers need and want to know about dating? Writing-in-role provides them with opportunities for discussion and research about one of their favourite topics.

LEVEL; Grade 8-12

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students could fill a box with anonymous questions and concerns about dating. These could become a starting point for a discussion about dating.
- With the teacher's help, students brainstorm a list of categories on the blackboard concerning the different aspects of dating.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- The teacher-in-role says, "As the editor of Westcoast Books I'm very excited about our newest venture, a book about dating for teenagers. For this project we have gathered you--parents, guidance counsellors, psychologists, and doctors--to work together in writing this book. The publisher has already determined the sections of the book on which you will be working in small groups. We would like you to provide information and suggestions in a format that will be easily accessible to teenagers."

- Students-in-role work in small groups to provide information and suggestions for each of the topics. These could later be compared with other group's work and synthesized.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Students could print up a handbook on dating that could be available to students through the guidance counsellor's office.

Lesson:	Guidance
Objectives:	To discuss teenager's concerns about dating To engage in problem solving
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Editor of Westcoast Books
Students-in-Role:	Parents, counsellors, psychologists, doctors
Format:	Handbook
Language Mode:	Transactional
Unit:	Small groups
Audience:	Class

EXTENSIONS

- This format is suitable for many different subject areas where students can work together co-operatively to produce a handbook (e.g. Study Tips, How to Survive Your Teenage Years).

THE OLYMPICS

Arithmetic

How do we see decimals used in everyday life? While Olympics occur once every four years, the method of scoring provides an excellent activity for students to learn how to add and average decimals.

LEVEL: Grade 4-6

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students review the addition and averaging of decimals through boardwork and exercises.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- The teacher-in-role says, "As a representative of the Olympic committee, I would like to extend a warm welcome and best wishes for the highest of achievements. The events will be commencing shortly after the raising of the nations' flags. Good luck to you all."

- Students brainstorm on the blackboard with help from the teacher a list of all those involved in the Olympics (e.g. athletes, judges, coaches, timekeepers, scorers, etc.).

- A mock Olympics is held with all the students participating in some manner. Cards are provided for judges on which to write their scores; a large chart is provided for record keeping and score averaging. Be sure that the Olympic events are fun and nonthreatening (e.g. eating a cracker and then whistling immediately afterwards).

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Have the students switch their roles frequently so that all can have the opportunity to practice using decimals.
- Look at some actual scores of real Olympic events.

Lesson:	Arithmetic
Objectives:	To add decimals To compute averages
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Olympic official
Students-in-Role:	Athletes, judges, coaches
Format:	Cards, charts, scoreboards
Language Mode:	Numbers
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Class

EXTENSIONS

- This format is useful in teaching and practicing other mathematical skills such as measurement (long and high jump), weight (weightlifting), and time (running events).

IN MEMORY

Visual Arts

How can we create an appropriate memorial for someone special? Art students become artists as they design, in-role, a new memorial in honour of Terry Fox.

LEVEL: Grade 6-12

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students study local, well-known, and historical memorials as well as research the person or event to be commemorated.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as council member says, "Thank you for coming to this meeting. You are being invited as artists of renown to participate in an exciting competition. For years the city has received complaints concerning the design of the Terry Fox Arch located near B.C. Place Stadium. We, the city council, have organized this competition in the hope that a new design, that will meet with public approval, will be presented. You may use any medium you wish in constructing this memorial but in your plans you must name the material out of which it will be constructed, the spot where it will be located, and an explanation for your choice of design. You must also include a commemorative plaque in his honour with an inscription.
- Students work in-role on an individual basis to develop their designs and plaques.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Students-in-role as artists present their designs and plaques to the city council representative in an oral presentation.

Lesson:	Visual Arts
Objectives:	To design a memorial To write an inscription in a plaque
Placement:	Post-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	City council member
Students-in-Role:	Artists
Format:	Design/inscription on plaque
Language Mode:	Poetic
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Class

EXTENSION

- This activity is suitable also as an extension in the study of historical figures and events as well as characters from literature.

NEWS HOUR

Current Events

What is involved in writing a good news report? By writing their own reports students can also learn about the responsibility and the power of the press.

LEVEL: Grade 6-10

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- The teacher and the class can engage in a discussion of the elements of a news report (who, what, when, where, how, and why) based upon articles selected from newspapers.
- Working in partners, students relate and analyze personal experiences according to the elements of a news report.
- Students, in small groups, rehearse events from a newspaper article.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as the director of News Hour says, "Is everyone here for the reporter's meeting? The producer of the show has set a 4 O'clock deadline for today's reports. You need to get going on your assignments and be ready for on-the-spot camera coverage. See if you can get any interviews while you are at it."
- Out of role, the teacher organizes students into small groups. Groups alternate reenactments of the events of the news articles with groups who are working as reporters who are covering the events. Students can interview participants of the events for more information.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Students-in-role as reporters are then "filmed" while reading their news reports for News Hour. Groups can replay parts of their reenactments as film footage or participate in live interviews on air.

Lesson:	Current Events
Objectives:	To identify elements of a news article To write an article based on observation and interview
Placement:	As alternate method of current events presentations
Teacher-in-Role:	Director of <u>News Hour</u>
Students-in-Role:	Reporters/Participants in news events
Format:	Report
Language Mode:	Transactional
Unit:	Small group
Audience:	Class

EXTENSIONS

- This format can also be used in other subject areas as the report can be based on an event from history, literature, or school.

MESSAGE FROM SPACE

Science

Can we continue to maintain zoos and aquariums for the display of animal and sea life? Students are placed in an analogous situation to delve into this issue.

LEVEL: Grade 4-7

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students can discuss visits to zoos and aquariums.
- Students can discuss the issue concerning the maintenance of animal and sea life in captivity for study and public enjoyment.

FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING-IN-ROLE

- Teacher-in-role as commander of Planet X-24 says, "Do not be afraid. I am the leader of this planet that you have crashed on. Since your spaceship was destroyed you will never be able to return home. However you will be kept safely and comfortably in this display unit where you will be cared for and studied. In ten years, when the planets will be in a perfect alignment you will be able to send messages home to your planet in a special pod."
- Prior to writing a letter, students can discuss in-role, the quality of existence for each of them.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- Teacher-in-role as official from NASA says, "I'm sure you are wondering why you have been called by NASA to come to this special meeting. Ten years have passed since the tragic disappearance of Spacecraft 66 and, as family members of the crew, you will be shocked and then thrilled to hear that we have recently received news of the crew. These are letters that we have received which we will now share with you by reading them aloud with your permission."
- Students previously written letters are presented to the class, now in-role as families of the crew members.

Lesson:	Science
Objectives:	To experience captivity To study analogously the situation of animals in zoos
Placement:	Pre-lesson
Teacher-in-Role:	Commander of Planet/Nasa official
Students-in-Role:	Astronauts/Families of astronauts
Format:	Letter
Language Mode:	Expressive
Unit:	Individual
Audience:	Class

EXTENSION

- Students, in-role as animal specialists, can design a zoo, aquarium, or game reserve that is suitable for the display of animal and/or sea life.

The Professional Day Workshop: Writing-in-Role.

"Writing-in-role is a teaching technique..."

What do they expect from us? How much more can I do? I'm already swamped with work. I just don't have time to introduce new ideas and methods into my classroom. I'm already two units behind.

I love professional days. They're better than facing my students--and it's great to look forward to a shorter work week.

It's good to see all the staff together. I had no idea that Gerry from woodworking was so interesting. Our paths never seem to cross except for days like these. Maybe I can make a point of joining him for coffee in the staffroom on occasion.

What a great lunch. That Mexican restaurant serves great burritos--not to mention, tequila, as well.

It's so hard to give a workshop when they've scheduled one for a Friday afternoon right after lunch. Sure the staff is relaxed--but nobody feels like listening--or working for that matter. Maybe a joke will catch their attention.

What terrific, practical suggestions. I'm tired of theory. I just want some ideas that I can take back to the classroom and use immediately.

It's good to see the staff laughing. Everyone was so tense because of the report card deadline being changed. We all seem so relaxed now.

How can I reach the man doodling on his notes. Listen, I'm sorry if this isn't what you wanted to listen to but this is what I was asked to speak about. Maybe you should have gotten involved in your professional development committee and helped plan a day that you would have found more useful.

I just don't see how this topic will be of help to me. What a waste of my time. If the English department was doing its job, then I wouldn't have to be listening to this.

What an interesting topic. I think I'll try to pick up a book on this subject and find out a little more about it.

I knew I shouldn't have put elastic bands around the handouts. There goes another one right now. Honestly, teachers are worse than their students when it comes to paying attention. Good shot--at least he caught the fellow who was snoring.

I can't see myself using these ideas in the classroom but they would make great party games. My Aunt Bessy would love them.

"Thank you for letting me a part of your professional day."

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