Task 1: Planning for Instruction and Assessment

Context for Learning Information

School Information:

- Northwest High School is a suburban high school located in northwest Hamilton County, Ohio.
- Northwest High School has a population of 1,038 students.

  The demographics (2012):

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>32.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher to Student Ratio</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In 2012, Northwest High School had 48.3% of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and breakfast programs. Ohio had 44.4% of eligible students for free or reduced price lunch programs, which places Northwest High School at a 3.1% higher average than the state average. Eligibility for the National School Lunch Program is based on family income levels.

- Northwest High School does not provide transportation for its students, so the majority of pupils walk to school. During inclement weather this greatly affects student attendance.

- Northwest High School’s campus includes Butler Tech, a career development center which offers students the opportunity to obtain training in several work related fields: Technology, Criminal Justice, Healthcare, etc. Students involved in the Butler Tech program move between Northwest High School for their core curriculum classes and Butler Tech for career oriented courses. Several students in my English I classes are involved with the Butler Tech program.

- Northwest High School’s Language Arts department has developed a required curriculum for 9th grade English students, which follows specific pacing guidelines. Beginning October 2013, the school has initiated MAP assessments in Reading and Language to measure current student achievement levels and will retest students in the winter of 2013 and spring of 2014. Data from these assessments is being used to guide instruction according to students’ needs and abilities.

Classroom Information:

- My 9th grade students have daily English-Language Arts instruction for fifty minutes each day, titled English I Advanced. There are two ELA courses taught at this high school: English I Advanced and English I honors. Lower level learners are grouped into the English I Advanced classes, and the students that are expected to move forward during
their 11th and 12th grade years into Advanced Placement English, are grouped into the English I Honors courses. The literature covered in the English I Advanced course is arranged in thematic units that connect the literature to social, cultural, and historical influences.

MAP testing assessments will be utilized in the future for grouping students within the classroom during small group work and discussions.

- The primary textbook for English I Advanced is McDougal Littell *Literature*, published in 2008. This classroom has a portable projector which may be utilized with a white board, a portable smart board that is used in conjunction with a laptop computer and projector, online access to the text through Classzone.com, and physical copies of the text that remain in the class. A bank of six desktop computers and one printer are on a long desk along the back wall. The rest of the classroom is set-up in the traditional classroom setting. The desks are in rows facing the wall containing the dry erase board. Movement of the portable smart board and projectors can be difficult because of lack of space within the classroom.

**Student Information in Class Featured:**

1. Students are 9th grade students.
2. Number of
   - students in class 24
   - males 12 females 12
3. Required or Needed Supports

**Students with Specific Learning Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IEP/504 Plans: Classification/Needs</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Supports, Accommodations, Modifications, Pertinent IEP Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual processing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Small group for testing, extended time for testing, tests read aloud, notes provided after attempt made to take notes on own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Language processing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Small group for testing if anxiety is high, extended time to process and respond, signal system with teacher to indicate the need for help as needed, multiple choice or yes/no questions to avoid open-ended responses when anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impaired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extended time to complete assignments, alternate testing locations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Commentary

1. Central Focus

a. Describe the central focus and purpose for the content you will teach in this learning segment.

   a. The central focus of this three-day learning segment is identifying descriptive and figurative language in literature and using this understanding to support original ideas through task specific writing. Other goals are to encourage students to actively participate in small group settings, work effectively on individual activities, and to become acquainted with peer evaluations as a learning tool.

   b. Provide the title, author, and a short description of salient features on the text(s) that a reviewer of your evidence, who is unfamiliar with the texts, needs to know in order to understand your instruction. If there is more than one text, indicate the lesson(s) where each text will be the focus.

   b. Students will use selections of literature from their primary source text, as well as unconventional writing prompts and techniques that will assist in expanding their critical thinking skills. This will allow the students to make connections between their primary text and their own personal experiences.

   The three descriptive paragraph selections that will be utilized during the first day of instruction come from the primary source text, McDougal Littell Literature. They are excerpts from these short stories: A Sound of Thunder, by Ray Bradbury, The Most Dangerous Game, by Richard Connell, and The Rights to the Streets of Memphis, by Richard Wright. Students have prior knowledge of the three texts through various learning tasks, including: read a louds, contextual vocabulary study, guided reading notes, anticipation activities, and formal assessments. The Connell text is an autobiographical narrative and the other texts are fictional works. Descriptive and figurative language is heavily featured in the segments that I chose for the students to reevaluate during this task specific learning segment, where descriptive and figurative language is the central focus.

   c. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address students’ abilities to

      ▪ construct meaning from, and interpret complex text
      ▪ create a written product interpreting or responding to complex features of a text

   c. Reading Standards for Literature 6-12 R.9.4 aligns directly with the central focus of this learning segment. Determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative meanings is a main component of the learning objectives of this learning segment. The students in this classroom are unfamiliar with complex texts; acquiring the skills of identifying and interpreting figurative language gives them tools to interpret this type of challenging literature. They are able to use that understanding to support their own original ideas through task specific writing that responds to the complex features of a text. This aligns with Writing Standards 6-12 W.9.3d, Text Types and Purposes.

   d. Explain how your plans build on each other to help students make connections between textual references, constructions of meaning, interpretations, and responses to a text to deepen their learning of English-Language Arts.
d. This three-day learning segment utilizes prior knowledge of descriptive and figurative language and increases the cognitive demands on the students each day. The three lessons build upon students’ prior learning and increasingly ask students to link new information and skills to their prior knowledge. Day One of the learning segment provides students the opportunity to connect with complex texts that have been part of previous lessons, and to view the texts and apply prior knowledge of descriptive and figurative language in a new manner. It gives the students the experience of identifying and analyzing descriptive and figurative language in complex texts in an interactive manner, with a smart board learning activity. Day Two increases the cognitive demands as students are required to link prior knowledge and prerequisite skills with an unfamiliar learning task. They will be utilizing descriptive and figurative language to write a descriptive paragraph in response to a photo prompt. A three column graphic organizer will be used to scaffold writing a descriptive paragraph, and they will be required to incorporate examples of figurative language. They will then be introduced to a higher cognitive task, peer evaluating. They will engage in critiquing each other’s writing, in small group settings. On Day Three of the learning segment, students will complete the emotions/figurative language worksheet to scaffold creating their own poem. This integrates prior knowledge of figurative language with a new task specific writing assignment. These students have had limited exposure to studying or creating poetic text, and this part of the learning segment will push the boundaries of their comfort zones, as they create original poetic text.

2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a-b), describe what you know about your students with respect to the central focus of the learning segment.

a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—What do students know, what can they do, and what are they learning to do?

   a. Students will have prior knowledge of four types of figurative language: similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. They will have some prior knowledge of descriptive language in the form of adjectives. They can identify both figurative language and descriptive language, however they have not had task specific assignments that combine identifying this type of language in a complex text. The interactive activity planned during this learning segment, utilizing smart board technology, will engage students as they are given the opportunity to practice this skill. Students will have limited prior academic learning and prerequisite skills that apply to the writing portion of the learning tasks during this learning segment. Scaffolding and teacher modeling will support and engage student learning in this new arena. The variety of learners in this class will be further supported by modifications that will be applicable to the special education students and the general education students. For example, students will have graphic organizers and worksheets that break activities into chunks that make the learning tasks more “digestible.”

b. Personal/cultural/community assets related to the central focus—What do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural backgrounds and practices, and interests?

   b. The students’ everyday experience and cultural backgrounds are formed by their community, which is blended and consists of working lower and working middle classes. Many of the students are products of single family household and often are raised by someone other than a biological parent (i.e., grandmother, aunt, etc.). Even at this young age many are looking
to obtaining employment in order to fund the activities that are part of today’s world. The majority of students in this class are not anticipating attending college, with many looking at career/vocational training or the military. This can make it more difficult to engage student learning in texts that seem complex and outside their realm of experiences. Scaffolding the instruction and working to find connections between these students and the texts becomes a main goal of my instruction, because of the cultural and community assets that they bring into our classroom.

3. Supporting Students’ English-Language Arts Learning

Respond to prompts 3a-c below. To support your explanations, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Task 1. In addition, use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations.

a. Explain how your understanding of your students’ prior academic learning and personal/cultural/community assets (from prompts 2a-b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials.

   a. This three-day learning segment builds upon students’ prior learning and increasingly asks students to link new information and skills to their prior knowledge. Day One of the learning segment provides students the opportunity to connect with complex texts that have been part of previous lessons, and to view the texts and apply prior knowledge of descriptive and figurative language in a new manner. This gives the students the experience of identifying descriptive and figurative language in an interactive manner, utilizing smart board technology, something which the students greatly enjoy. This has been an effective way to engage my classes in learning. Also, it will re-teach some of the skills to students that may not have a strong understanding. Students will then work cooperatively in small group settings to complete the three column graphic organizer, based on a photo prompt. Day Two of the learning segment will have students utilize their three column graphic organizers to scaffold writing a descriptive paragraph, based on the photo writing prompt (dog on moped). They will then be introduced to peer evaluations and will engage in critiquing each other’s writing, in small group settings. On Day Three of the learning segment, students will complete an emotions/figurative language worksheet to scaffold creating their own poem, which integrates prior knowledge of figurative language with a new task specific writing assignment. Students in this class have had limited interactions with poetry and this will give them the opportunity to become immersed in the discourse of poetry as they create original poems. Additionally, day one and day three of the learning segment begin with quick grammar “bootcamp” activities. MAP testing results, along with a three paragraph letter that students were required to write the first week of class has shown my cooperating teacher that students are lacking basic grammar foundations skills. Brief grammar activities are incorporated 2-3 days a week as bell ringers. Students are expected to incorporate these revisited grammar skills into their writing on days two and three of the learning segment. I used several references for the development of this learning segment. While observing at Ursuline Academy, I worked with Dr. Anne Hinkle and learned the effectiveness of small group settings, where students can practice cooperative learning. Here they will produce more ideas, participate more, and take greater intellectual risks. It also encourages social and emotional development, something which many of my 9th grade students struggle with, as they gain the ability to engage in collaborative learning and contribute to a productive learning environment.

b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs.
b. This learning segment employs several teaching strategies that are aimed to engage a variety of learners, including students with specific learning needs. Planned supports during the first day of the learning segment will include: I will employ teacher modeling of identifying figurative language on the smart board. I will also model the process of utilizing a photo writing prompt, completing a three column graphic organizer (detailing nouns, adjectives, and verbs, all describing the photo), and will project on the smartboard and read a completed, sample descriptive paragraph. This instructional scaffolding will provide the students with effective strategies for completing the tasks. According to the Vacca and Vacca text, *Content Area Reading*, instructional scaffolding is an invaluable tool that provides the needed support for a variety of learners as they attempt new learning tasks. Day Three of the learning task also employs teacher modeling, as I will model the process of completing the figurative language/emotions poem worksheet through the “thinking aloud” process, and will model a completed, art embellished poem. The skeleton structure of the worksheet is a modified graphic organizer and it will provide the needed scaffolding for variety of learners in my classes. The learning segment combines several types of learning settings: direct instruction, activating prior knowledge through a re-teaching activity, large group instruction, small group/collaborative learning, individualized instruction, group and individual reporting, and checking for understanding by informal and formal assessment.

c. Describe common students’ errors or misunderstandings within your central focus and how you will address them.

c. The central focus of this three-day learning segment is identifying and analyzing descriptive and figurative language in literature and using this understanding to support original ideas through task specific writing. During past learning segments students have demonstrated some struggles with aspects of figurative language, so if necessary, I will re-teach in order to activate prior knowledge of descriptive and figurative language, as students are asked to link these prerequisite skills with new learning tasks. During Day One of the learning segment, students will participate in a whole group activity where a specific type of figurative language, simile, is revisited. Students often have confused similes with metaphors and need to re-visit this aspect of the learning segment, in order to move on to more complex tasks.

4. Supporting English-Language Arts Development Through Language

a. Language Function. Identify one language function essential for students within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Argue</th>
<th>Describe</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Justify</td>
<td>Synthesize</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a. Teaching my students to analyze descriptive and figurative language in complex texts and to use this analysis to interpret an author’s stylistic elements is an essential language function for the students in my class. They must bring this skill to the progressively more complex learning tasks on days two and three of the learning segment, as they are asked to compose descriptive paragraphs and poetic text, using figurative and descriptive language.
b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number)

b. During the day one of the learning segment (lesson plan one) students will be actively engaged in analyzing descriptive and figurative language in complex texts. The students will use prior knowledge of figurative language and will participate in a whole group activity identifying figurative and descriptive language in excerpts from three complex texts that they have read during previous lessons. Smart board technology will be utilized to encourage student engagement and to increase participation. Whole class discussion will take place in which the author’s stylistic writing choices are analyzed.

c. Additional Language Demands. Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use:

- Vocabulary
- Plus at least one of the following
  - Syntax
  - Discourse

c. In the learning task described above, students must utilize prior knowledge in order to be able to identify and analyze descriptive and figurative language in complex texts. Students must understand the following vocabulary/figurative language terms: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. They must also understand the vocabulary phrase “descriptive language.” A quick review of similes will be conducted using whole group participation in completing a short worksheet to activate prior knowledge. This learning task will also re-teach the concept of simile to students who are struggling. Students must acquire the knowledge of these vocabulary terms, but also must immerse themselves in the discourse of writing, which includes understanding of descriptive language and figurative language, and also the usage of these terms as they participate in learning tasks. Immersing students in the discourse they are studying was a teaching tool I learned in the course, Content Area Literacy. Dr. Delane Bender-Slack emphasized the importance of immersion in the discourse that students are learning about. They have to “become” active readers and writers in order to have a deeper understanding of the discourse. Immersing my students in the discourse of writing, which includes understanding and usage of essential language demands, will give them the ability to fully participate in all of the learning tasks during this learning segment and future learning segments.

d. Language Supports. Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.

- Describe the instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) that helps students understand and successfully use the language function and additional language demands identified in prompts 4a-c.

d. Instructional supports that took place prior to the learning task include a whole class activity utilizing a worksheet to deepen understanding of the figurative language term simile. This will reinforce learning from prior learning activities, including a power point presentation about figurative language, during which students took notes in their notebooks, detailing the denotative meanings of simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. During the learning
task students will be asked to identify descriptive and figurative language in three excerpts from texts that they have read and interacted with during previous learning segments. This will be done utilizing smart board technology and will aid in engaging students in this vital learning task. This whole group activity and discussion will provide language supports to build students’ academic language usage when describing and analyzing figurative language. Students at with a lower level of academic language comprehension will be supported by the interactive nature of the learning task. In past learning tasks underperforming students and students with IEPs are more apt to be engaged with this type of activity and to actively participate, thus reinforcing their acquired academic skills.

5. Monitoring Student Learning

*In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Task 1.*

a. Describe how your planned formal and informal assessments will provide direct evidence of students’ abilities to construct meaning from, interpret, and/or respond to a complex text throughout the learning segment.

a. During the first day of the learning segment students will be informally assessed through their participation in the whole group activity—revisiting three different complex texts (using smart board technology) through the identification and analysis of figurative language; similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. Different students will circle figurative and descriptive language examples and whole class identification of the type of language will ensue. There will be whole group discussion of how this figurative and descriptive language is used by authors and how it enables them to interpret and respond to these complex texts. This discussion will also be informally assessed. Additional assessments during the first learning segment include: observation of students as they work in small group settings and observing whole group sharing. Formal assessments for the first day of the learning segment will be on the three column organizers which detail nouns, adjectives, and verbs that are inspired by the photo prompt (dog on moped), and also the strength of their topic sentences, which will be used in their descriptive paragraphs during day two of the learning segment. During the second day of the learning segment I will informally assess students as they work independently on their descriptive paragraphs and as they work in pairs to complete peer evaluations. The formal assessment of student artifacts (completed descriptive paragraphs) will provide direct evidence of the students’ abilities to respond to a complex text. They will have interacted and analyzed a complex, descriptive text during the first day of the learning segment. They will then be asked to integrate this new skill and demonstrate their understanding of how authors use figurative and descriptive language into their own descriptive writing assignment.

b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

b. Much of the planned assessments for this learning segment were developed to be applicable to a variety of learners, including my students with IEPs. The English I Advanced class is specifically for the lower level learners in the 9th grade at Northwest High School. These lessons will be taught approximately five weeks into the school year. Early assessments of students’ writing/language abilities and their reading comprehension is currently being studied to further direct the type of learning tasks and assessments best suited to this group of students. Modifications to the lesson and assessment will be made if necessary to accommodate
struggling students. Specific modifications that are applicable to my students with IEP’s or 504 plans will be implemented upon necessity. Planned supports include: during the day one learning segment lower level learners will be allowed extended time for developing their topic sentences. The assessment of their three column graphic organizers (detailing nouns, adjectives, and verbs pertaining to the photo prompt) will be consistent with the rest of the class. They will be working in small groups with students of varying abilities so that higher level learners will be able to assist lower level learners. During day two of the learning segment, students will be required to utilize descriptive and figurative language as they create descriptive paragraphs in response to a photo prompt. Students with IEPs or 504 plans will be permitted to use an intervention specialist if they are struggling with this writing assignment. They will also be allowed extra time to complete the descriptive paragraph. Assessment of their descriptive paragraphs will be consistent with other students in the class.