Unit One addressed the big picture of labor market realities—which industries are growing, which are shrinking, and technology’s impact on the market. Students learned about a wide range of careers in the Education and Childcare sector.

Unit Two addressed the inner workings of the job-seeker. What are her interests and passions? What kind of work environment will she enjoy? What careers should she consider based on what she knows about herself and what factors might influence someone making a career change? Students also learned to navigate career database websites, assessed their own interests and conducted a group research project about careers in the Education and Childcare sector.

In Unit Three, students considered what it takes to prepare for a career in Education and Childcare. They learned about a wide variety of careers in the industry and the kinds of training and education opportunities available to prepare someone to work in this field.

In Unit Four, students’ research becomes personalized. They hear from Education and Childcare workers themselves, through firsthand accounts and interviews in text and video, and discuss what they learn.
1. **VIDEO NARRATIVES IN EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

Students watch and discuss videos about careers in Education and Childcare and practice constructed response.

2. **USING QUESTION STEMMS AS A READING STRATEGY: CAREER NARRATIVES IN EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

Students practice reading, research and note-taking skills by reading Education and Childcare career narratives, then conducting further research on the Education or Childcare career of their choice.

2.1 • **Computer Research: Career Narratives in Education and Childcare**

Students conduct further research on the Education or Childcare career of their choice.

3. **WRITING ACTIVITY SERIES: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

Students read and discuss a narrative describing a day in the life of Justine, a school psychologist who works with high school and early childhood students. They then complete a writing activity about the school psychologist profession, including a first draft, peer review and revisions. Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.

3.1 • **A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part 1**

Students read and discuss the first installment of a two-part reading about a school psychologist.

3.2 • **A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part 2**

Students read and discuss the conclusion of the school psychologist story and prepare to write about it.

3.3 • **Writing Activity: School Psychologist** [UPDATED FEB. 2018]

Students write a first draft of a three-paragraph writing assignment about the school psychologist story, describing her job as well as their own interests in Education careers.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

3.4 • **Peer Editing and Revision** [UPDATED FEB. 2018]

Students read each other’s writing and offer feedback. Each writer then revises his or her work, based on partner feedback.
Video Narratives in Education and Childcare

Students view short videos about workers describing their jobs in the Education and Childcare sector and write responses to questions about the videos. The following page describes and provides links to short videos on various careers in the sector. YouTube has hundreds of short videos on dozens of careers. Teachers may use the ones listed or find new ones.

PREP

- Pre-screen and select a video that students will view, using the recommended lists on the following pages or other videos that you find.
- Adapt the Written Response: Education and Childcare Career Video Narratives worksheet to the video you choose.

MATERIALS

- Requires use of a computer and projector.
- Written Response: Education and Childcare Career Video Narratives worksheet

EXPLAIN

1 Analyzing data about careers is important, but it’s also helpful to hear about how workers in the field experience their jobs. If you met someone who works in a field you are interested in, what questions would you ask them?
   
   − What they do at work, how they got their job, what they like and don’t like about it, and advice for newcomers to the field.

2 Today we are going to watch a video about working as a ____________. We are going to watch it twice. The first time, listen for the main ideas. Which career does the video describe? Does the worker seem to like his/her job? How do you know? Then, you are going to read a series of questions about the video, and listen with answering the questions in mind. After watching a second time, you are going to write responses to the questions.

3 Play the video. Have a brief discussion about what students learned about the career and the worker's experience of it.

4 Distribute the Written Response worksheet. Ask students to read the questions, but not write anything yet.
Lesson Guide

5 Play the video a second time.

6 Ask students to complete the *Written Response* worksheet.

---

**Video Narratives About Careers in Education and Childcare**

The videos listed below Education and Childcare careers from the worker’s perspective. YouTube has hundreds more which can be found by conducting keywords searches for “__________ career,” for example “teacher career” or “school bus driver career.”

1. **CHILD CARE CENTER**

   **Childcare Center Worker**
   Depicts perspectives from childcare workers as well as those responsible for hiring childcare workers, including what qualities they look for in new hires. *(8 minutes)*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6m3ZQBY31E

2. **PARAPROFESSIONALS**

   **Paraprofessionals (shorter)**
   An inside look at two paraprofessionals, also called paraeducators, as they work one-on-one with students in the classroom. *(7.5 minutes)*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVrF4_0RkOo

   **Paraprofessionals (longer)**
   A longer video, depicting a detailed look at the responsibilities and techniques of paraeducators. *(30 minutes)*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snLAF1ElE8qg&t=18s

3. **TEACHERS**

   **Kindergarten Teacher**
   A look at a day in the life of a kindergarten teacher. *(3 minutes)*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsHCK1LLGhc

   **Bilingual Teacher**
   A bilingual teacher discusses her motivation in becoming a bilingual teacher, including her own parents’ and teachers’ challenges in communicating with one
another, and how, as a child she had to be the family translator. She describes the power of a teacher communicating directly with parents in their own language. *(1 minute)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kku-vxSNQXE

**Dual Language School Programs**

An overview of dual language elementary school programs, including the benefits to students and the challenges to schools in implementing them. *(4.5 minutes)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dzO9upZO8I

### 4. NON-TEACHING SCHOOL CAREERS

**School Counselor**

A teacher describes her motivation in switching career tracks to become a counselor, based on her interest in focusing on the whole student, not only in academics. She also describes her employer paying for her education to make her career change possible. *(2 minutes)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXRZF0lyxE

**School Secretary**

A former teacher describes her choice and work as a school secretary. She describes a typical day in her busy school office. *(2 minutes)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yz6BTaNtVgw

### 5. LIBRARY CAREERS

**Library Management**

A New York Public Library manager talks about how he entered the field of library work straight out of high school and moved his way up within the library system. *(1.5 minutes)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSJX-0uugY

**Library Assistant**

An overview video that explains how librarian assistants contribute to the efficient functioning of libraries, including the tasks they engage in on a daily basis. *(1.5 minutes)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxrQXV85yI0
Written Response: Education and Childcare Career Video Narratives

Write complete responses to the questions below, based on the video narrative.

1. Which career(s) does this video describe?

2. What does the person/people in the video do at work?

3. In addition to what they describe doing at work, what additional tasks do you think they do at work?

4. Does the main speaker in the video enjoy his/her job? Provide evidence from the video that supports your claim.
5 What kind of preparation is required for this career?

6 What are some advantages and disadvantages of working in this field?

7 Which additional careers does this career interact with?

8 Is this a career you would be interested in? Why or why not?
Using Question Stems as a Reading Strategy: Career Narratives in Education and Childcare

Students read one or more Education and Childcare career narratives, then develop and answer questions as a reading strategy. Students can choose from the following narratives:

- Paraprofessional
- School Secretary
- School Bus Driver
- Kindergarten Teacher
- High School Guidance Counselor

PREP

In the preceding class, have students sign up to read the Education or Childcare career narrative of their choice. It’s okay if there is a career that no one signs up for. Be prepared to discuss the utility of this activity for students who are interested in sectors other than Education and Childcare.

Examples of uses include improving reading skills, practicing developing questions about reading, expanding vocabulary, learning about Education and Childcare professions they may come in contact with as a user for themselves, a family member or friend.

MATERIALS

- Career Narratives in Education and Childcare Sign-up
- Career Narrative Questions handout
- Career Narratives

EXPLAIN

1. Distribute the Career Narrative Questions handout. Ask students to complete the first three prompts explaining why they chose the story, what they predict it will be about and what they expect to learn from reading it.

2. Ask students to annotate their reading, marking parts they thought were important, interesting, surprising or confusing.
3 Distribute the *Career Narratives*, and give students time to read and annotate.

4 When students have finished reading, direct them back to the questions page. Explain that research shows that when people ask their own questions, they remember more of what they read. Here, part of the question is written for them, and part of the question they will have to fill in. Ask students to complete the questions. You may want to have students read aloud a few of the questions once they are completed, or you can circulate to check progress.

5 After students write the questions, ask them to answer the questions.
# Career Narrative Sign-up

In the space below, sign up to read a story about one of the following careers:

- Paraprofessional
- School Secretary
- School Bus Driver
- Kindergarten Teacher
- High School Guidance Counselor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Career Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Career Narrative Questions

Before reading the story, complete the statements below:

1. I chose the story about being a ______________________ because ____________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. I predict this narrative is about ____________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. I expect to learn ____________________________ from reading this narrative.
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

After reading the narrative, complete and answer the following questions:

1. What does a ______________________ do every day?

2. What are the best parts of being a ______________________?
3 What are the challenges of being a ________________?

4 Why did ________________ say ________________? What does it mean, and why is it important?

5 What is one surprising and/or interesting thing you learned about being a ________________?

6 What else do you want to find out about being a ________________ that’s not explained in the article?

7 Do you think you would want to be a ________________? Why or why not?
Paraprofessionals: A Parent’s Perspective

Adapted from http://quirks-and-chaos.blogspot.com/2015/03/paraprofessionals-angels-among-us.html

If I were limited to two words to describe Richie, my autistic son’s paraprofessional, they would be: “autism whisperer.” But fortunately I can say much more. Mr. Richie was with Tate for much of third grade, all of fourth, and all of fifth grade. Mr. Richie has a huge presence but I don’t know how he does it because he is one of the quietest guys I know. He taught Tate to do things no one else was having any luck at. Mr. Richie always seemed to know what Tate was thinking. He could talk Tate down from a meltdown as well as I could have myself. Maybe better. He was firm yet kind. Academically, Tate did very well with Mr. Richie at his side too. Richie was good at getting Tate to try new activities and foods. Tate wanted to please Richie because he cared about what Richie thought. THAT is huge in our world. Tate does not show much affection or appear to have much interest in many people other than family; but he connected with Mr. Richie. Mr. Richie taught Tate many social skills.

Several times Tate got frustrated enough with Richie to say, “You are fired!” Once was when Tate had become obsessed with his watch. He would stare at his watch to see the numbers change when he should have been doing his classwork. Richie occasionally had to take the watch away from Tate. No one but Richie could have taken that watch and still gotten Tate past the meltdown and refocused on the task at hand.

The Junior High transition had the potential to be a real nightmare but in stepped an amazing new para named Miss A. She is young, full of enthusiasm, always has a smile, and is a great support to Tate. I do not think sixth grade would have gone half as well as it did without Miss A. This year Tate has Miss A with him part of the day and he has also graduated to rotating through paras as he goes from class to class. There are four total and I like all four of them! More
importantly, Tate likes them all and they are really good with him.

So, what makes a good paraprofessional? Of course many of the qualities of a good para are obvious. A para needs to be kind and compassionate, enjoy children, and have a good attitude—even when the job is messy or hard. The para must be able to teach at the grade level of the child they are helping. If a para is helping in the high school in an algebra class but cannot do algebra then no one is going to benefit. A para should be physically fit enough to stick with the child they have been assigned to work with. Tate needed social skills coaching on the playground when he was in elementary school. Tate also required para support in PE at times. His para was sometimes called on to run up and down a soccer field or play kickball.

Then there are qualities that might not be so obvious. A sense of humor will come in handy. It is important not to take it personally when a child with autism says what they think. Many times Tate has reported to one of the adults in his world that their skin is a bit wrinkly or they are getting up there in years. Sometimes these kids are funny! Enjoy them! Of course, there is a difference between laughing about something kids say or do, and laughing at them in a mean-spirited way.

A para should not be squeamish. A person hired to work with a handicapped child should not be afraid of sticky fingers, sneezes, drool, or puddles of any other bodily fluids. A para might be called upon to teach a child to: blow their nose, comb their hair, use a fork, button, zip, tie, wipe or wash, among many other things. A para might be asked to teach using: water, sand, dirt, clay, shaving cream, paint, or many other substances.

A para may need to learn sign language, braille, or other skills just so they can work with one student. My kids’ paras have had to do some things they may have never considered when they applied for the job. Some skills might seem insignificant yet make a big difference for the child. One para has spent hours of hard work teaching my little girl to play one song on the recorder. The other students in her class were onto much harder pieces by the time my daughter
mastered that first song: Hot Cross Buns. The para was probably hearing that whistle in her dreams at night due to all the time it took, but she was so patient. I had given up all hope of Sydney mastering that song but the para had not. I had even asked Sydney’s teacher if they could just skip the recorder but Sydney insisted she wanted to learn to play that recorder, just like her peers. Because of the tenacity and patience of one para, Sydney can proudly play that song.

Sometimes a para has to spend a lot of time collecting data and doing paperwork. For many parents, the note they send home is very important and cannot be neglected. It is a parent’s link to school and helps them know what their child is working on and how they can help. The data a para is sometimes called upon to collect may seem like a waste of time but is very important in determining what kind of help the student will receive. Sometimes a para may not appreciate what is asked of them but they are required to do it anyway.

A para must be able to “grin and bear it.”

Paras will be called upon to make personal sacrifices on occasion. They might be asked to do something minor, like discontinue the use of perfumes so a child with sensory needs can be more comfortable. But bigger sacrifices are asked too. Some paras go home with bruises. There are students who exhibit self-injurious behavior and some who become violent. Paras have to be able to keep the student safe or even defend themselves without returning any aggression. And it all has to be done while staying calm.

Who are these people we ask so much of? Who are these people who love our kids and see their potential? Who are these people who have to implement all those “great ideas” our kid’s teams think up while we are in those IEP meetings? Who are these people who keep coming back for more? They are “angels among us” and they are called paraprofessionals. They make a difference in our children’s lives every day in little ways that we will never even realize. They make a big difference in our children’s lives and whole family’s lives too. They help make our children who they become. There would never be enough money or words to reward these people the way they ought to be rewarded.
“So, what’s it really like working as a... school secretary?”

From http://www.momentumcareersadvice.com/tag/the-monday-interview/

Are you a natural organizer, great at multi-tasking and ready to deal with whatever is thrown at you? Have you always wanted to work with or around children, but the idea of teaching has never appealed or never been quite the right choice? Perhaps you are a working parent, looking for one of the few jobs out there that works well (most of the time, at least) around school hours and holidays?

Terri explains how working as a school secretary can fulfill all the criteria above while providing an enjoyable work environment and varied work day. She gives a great account of her job, including some very useful advice on how to break into this popular career area.

So, briefly, what is your job?
I am a School Secretary. I work in a small school with a small staff, so my responsibilities are basically whatever needs to be done, from calling home when children are sick to completing the school census for the Education Department; from booking and arranging school trips to doling out first aid to children with scraped knees; I order stationary and any other supplies needed for the school, arrange for contractors to come in and service the alarm systems, complete repairs and do anything else the head teacher needs me to do.

How did you get into it?
I've always wanted to work in a school and thought of being a teacher when I was a student but I was too impatient to collect a paycheck, so that didn't happen. I have an Associate’s Degree in Administrative Studies and worked as an Administrative Assistant in a small company, and these qualifications are definitely necessary for the job. Jobs in school administration are popular with parents for obvious reasons and not always easy to come by. I had been the volunteer secretary for this school's playgroup for a couple of years so I was already known to the school when I applied for my current job.

Describe a typical day.
There is no such thing as a typical day! Today I started by scheduling appointments for the school principal and ordering supplies for two departments. I made sure all the paperwork was ready for the school trip one class was going on. I helped with the on-going arrangements for the end-of-term party and the arrangements for the imminent arrival of two visitors from our Kenyan partner school. I supervised a child who was referred to the office for a “time-out.”
I explained to a teacher what a scrunchie was. In between all this I answered the phone, sorted out all the phone requests, dealt with various problems that parents came to me with and said a sad farewell to one of our student teachers.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I love the fact that every day is different and nearly every day is fun. The children are lovely for the most part and I enjoy the contact with them while not having to actually teach them. Some days are challenging and need decision-making on my part when the assistant principal is not there, other days are pure escapism—we had a whole school Halloween party this year when we all got to wear costumes all day.

**And the least?**

I honestly can’t think of anything I don’t like about my job. I look forward to going in every day.

**What are the common misconceptions that people have about the work you do?**

I think people probably assume that all I do is typing and answering the phone but those tasks are just a part of my job. I think they would be amazed at how much is involved in running a school and how much of that falls to the School Secretary, especially in a small school like ours.

**What are the main skills you need to work as a school secretary?**

Apart from the obvious office-based skills, I think you need a sense of humor, the willingness to take on any task, the ability to prioritize, to be efficient and well organized and to be able to think on your feet and adapt to whatever a particular day calls for. Good interpersonal skills are essential as you have to deal with children, parents, staff, governors, visitors, salespeople, contractors—the list is endless and you need to be able to form good relationships with them all.

**Tell us a little about the benefits that come with the job.**

An obvious benefit, particularly for parents, is the fact that you (more or less) work school hours and have the school holidays off work. Pay is reasonable, depending on the grade of your job and there is a certain amount of job security as the school will always need administrative staff. For me the main benefit is the enormous job satisfaction, the involvement in the life of the school which in turn means involvement in the community.

**What advice would you give someone wanting to break into this career?**

There is understandably a lot of competition for jobs in schools because of the hours, holidays etc. so apart from the usual office qualifications and experience I would say that if you can demonstrate an interest in school life or working with children, for example volunteering with your local PTA or playgroup, scouts, sports team etc. it will give you an advantage over other candidates.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years’ time?**

I am old enough to be retired in 10 years’ time but I very much hope I will continue working in my little school until that time comes. It’s the best job I have ever had.
What Is it Like to be a School Bus Driver?
Adapted from Tami Hatke; http://stnonline.com/news/blogs/item/6410-what-is-it-like-to-be-a-school-bus-driver

What’s it like to be a school bus driver? This is one of the questions school bus drivers get asked. First of all, let me tell you a little bit about the difference between driving a car and driving a school bus. The average automobile is only about 5 feet wide and weighs between 2,000 and 3,000 pounds. The average school bus is 8 feet wide (not counting the mirrors), 40 feet long and weighs at least 20,000 pounds. When you are driving a car, your front wheels are about 3 feet in front of you, and your rear wheels are 4 feet behind you. In a school bus the rear wheels are 30 feet behind you. You have to be someone special to do what we do. And I’m proud to say that.

It’s not something just anyone can do. It’s not all about driving the 40-foot long, 12-ton vehicle and opening and shutting the door. You have to love children and understand that children are learning and make mistakes. You have to be very consistent, be a good listener, show compassion, know how to tie shoes, reward good behavior, teach them how to turn their bad behavior into good behavior and be someone that they look up to. You need to have good rapport with the students and the parents to make a bus run smoothly.

In all the years I have driven a school bus I have been: hugged; kissed; high-fived; hit; kicked; cussed at; flipped the bird; fist in my face; back-talked to; puked on; coughed on; sneezed on; spit on; licked; and hit by backpacks, instruments and gym bags. I have been told I’m pretty, told my son/daughter, told me I was having a bad hair day. I’ve been asked how much I weighed, my age, am I married and is it fun to drive a bus. Out of the mouths of babes! These are things that I will never forget. Good and bad, it has been a great experience.

My day begins just like any other typical day. I’m up at 5:00am, I get in the shower, get dressed, get a cup of coffee and I’m out the door. I start my bus to prepare it. We must check all the lights, tires, doors, the fluid levels, the brakes, etc. I leave at exactly the same time every day. I try to be very consistent for the students. Each day is different, there are no days the same. You never know what your trip will entail or what kind of obstacle you will face. Sometimes Mother Nature isn’t very nice to us. We drive in fog, sleet, snow, ice, extreme cold and hot conditions. Sometimes our bus breaks down and we have to pull over and wait on the mechanics to bring us a sub bus. There goes your consistency for that route. Sometimes you have a student vomit and you have to pull over to clean it up before the other students start to follow.

I get to my first stop, load them, wait for them to get seated, shut the door and proceed to the next stop and continue this process until I have completed each stop. But not all stops go smoothly. Some students aren’t ready so you have to wait on them. And I am still trying to
keep my consistency for the other students. Each late student makes my consistency not so consistent. Some take what seems forever to get seated, some get on with their breakfast because they didn’t have time to eat it. It’s so hard to tell them “no eating on the bus” when you know they need their breakfast to start the day off well.

I say “Good Morning” to all of my students. Some say good morning back, some give you a smile, while others don’t even look at you, let alone say anything. Some stops I will have a distracted motorist run my stop arm. Then it’s up to me to get the description of the vehicle, description of the driver and the plate number, all while making sure the student doesn’t get hit and remains safe. It makes my blood boil when someone ignores the Stop arm on my bus. It’s a huge yellow bus with red flashing lights! We are doing our best to keep these children safe and get them back to their parents safely. The parents put their trust in us! Our main enemy is the actual motorist, not the student. We have motorists honk at us for taking too long to load or unload.

We have motorists pull out in front of us so they won’t have to wait behind us. We have been given the finger and I see their mouth moving but can’t hear them so I’m sure it’s not some very nice words coming out of their mouths. And we have to keep calm and not do the same back. The motorist who calls our boss to report us for something tiny is the same motorist that pulls out in front of us, runs our Stop arm and puts our precious cargo in danger. It’s extremely aggravating and scary to see a motorist run the stop arm and see that they are either talking on their phone or texting. But one thing I’m sure of, if it was their child getting on or off the bus they would be more alert and conscious of their surroundings.

We never know when we will run across an accident that has blocked the road, a construction detour or some other obstacle that causes us to make a quick decision on the best way to avoid that obstacle and still stay on time. Parents worry if their children aren’t home on time.

We rarely have subs to drive our routes, so if we wake up not feeling well, most of the time we drive anyway. We don’t get paid a lot for the responsibility that we have. You have to have a love for children to be a good all-around bus driver. It’s not easy to be the one and only adult supervising and driving safely up to 84 students.

We see more than what you realize. That leads to another question we are often asked: “Do bus drivers really have eyes in the back of their heads”? That is a question that will never be answered...we can’t give away our secret. Once the students have been unloaded safely at school and back home again, we take a deep breath as another route has been completed safe and sound! Time to check the bus and make sure no students are asleep or hiding.

The bus is parked to sleep for the night, and the driver too! And less than 13 hours later we will start the process all over again, not knowing what obstacle may lie in our way of getting our precious cargo to its destination safe and sound!
Kindergarten Teacher

As told to Blake Ellis

Adapted from http://money.cnn.com/interactive/pf/24-hours-with-a-kindergarten-teacher/

Waking up before sunrise to make photocopies and grade papers hasn’t gotten any less grueling for 27-year-old Laura Chiang, who has been a teacher for five years now. But she still can’t imagine doing anything else. Chiang teaches kindergarten at a public school in a high poverty area of Albuquerque, N.M, where nearly every student qualifies for free lunch because their family income is at or below the poverty line. But her students help put things in perspective. Throughout her years teaching, she has helped students deal with homelessness or having a parent incarcerated. She has spent hundreds of dollars of her own money on school supplies and clothing for kids in need and has spent dozens of hours translating documents and letters into Spanish for students’ families who know little English.

Here are journal entries from a day in her life:

4:40 a.m.

I get out of bed to go to the gym. Everything is packed up and ready to go from the night before, so all I need to do is get dressed in my gym clothes, brush my teeth, force in my contacts, and prepare my breakfast.

6:15 a.m.

I run off to the locker room for a quick shower. I remember that today is school picture day and that today’s photo will be the one on my ID.

6:55 a.m.

I park in one of the coveted front parking spaces and greet everyone I meet with the best smile my tired self can muster. I walk into my classroom and put away my lunch, set up my computer, check my work e-mail, and make sure that all of today’s materials are prepared. I curse myself that I forgot to make copies of today’s Social Studies project. I grab the master copy and briskly walk to the work room, hoping at least one copier is available and functional. The principal comes onto the loudspeaker, announcing that the students will be arriving in our classrooms.
20 minutes early due to the rain outside. I rejoice when a copier becomes available within 30 seconds. I grab the copies the second they come out, almost run back to the room, and open the door just as the bell rings.

7:25 a.m.

Whenever the kids first come inside, I put on a fun, but educational video such as WordGirl or The Magic School Bus. While they watch the video I use the time to sort through new games to go with the skills we’ve been working on and return and “grade” papers. When I teach Kindergarten, I only put smiles on their papers and circle and correct mistakes. If there are many errors and especially if a student was careless, I may put a tiny smiley face or a note that I hope their parents will read.

7:40 a.m.

The bell rings and the day begins. The students put their homework folder in the basket, take their breakfast, and have a seat. All students receive free breakfast and lunch at the school.

8:05 a.m.

We are about to start our morning routine, and my class is called to the gym for pictures. When my students are finished, I begrudgingly have my photo taken and walk my kids back to class.

8:40 a.m.

During Morning Meeting, we greet one another, share, sing letter names and sounds, count, recite the rules, and read a morning message I write each morning. I love it because it helps build community and transition into the school day.

9:30 a.m.

We finish yesterday’s Social Studies project about U.S. symbols. While students are working, I rotate around, asking them about the U.S. symbols and informally assessing them on this week’s Social Studies objectives. The principal walks in with her iPad and I know what that means—I’m getting my weekly “walk-through.” This means I’m being “informally” assessed. I can’t help but feel scrutinized and judged, even though that’s not the principal’s intention. When the last student finishes, I transition the students to the carpet and the principal leaves.

10:45 a.m.

Due to the rain, it’s indoor lunch recess.

10:55 a.m.

I grab my lunch and walk over to my fellow Kindergarten teacher's classroom for lunch with a few other co-workers.

11:20 a.m.

I pick up the students from the cafeteria.
11:30 a.m.

The students and I go through the Calendar Math flipchart where they learn about the functions and part of the calendars, weather, counting to 100, place value, and basic numbers. Then I transition back to reading with sight word practice.

1:00 p.m.

It’s time for snack and preparation for dismissal. While snack is being passed out, a student requests a song that helps them learn how to spell number words one through five. I have a happy moment watching my students singing and enjoying an educational song during what is technically their free time. Then students clean up, pack up their backpacks and leave for Computers.

1:18 p.m.

I drop the students off at Computer class a couple minutes late and go back to the classroom. I realize that I had forgotten to type up and submit my professional development plan (PDP) for this year. I spend the remainder of my prep time figuring out my teaching goals and action plan.

1:55 p.m.

While my educational assistant leads half of the students to the buses, I take the other half to the parent pickup line.

2:05 p.m.

I have about an hour before I need to leave for the local community college. I’m taking a course focusing on translation. Although it’s not a requirement, I think it’s a necessity when I work in a school with so many Spanish-speaking parents. Last year, out of 23 students, 17 parents needed notes sent home in Spanish. I go to the computer to create resources I need for later in the week. I could buy what I want for a couple of dollars online, but I feel as though my paycheck is too small to justify buying something I can make in 20 minutes or less.

3:30 p.m.

I arrive at the college on time and am thankful I’m not running in a couple minutes late out of breath as usual.

4:45 p.m.

When class lets out I set up in a student lounge to work for about 45 minutes. I’m Grade Level Chair this year, and this week I found out that our school will not have money for field trip transportation, so we will have to find a grant for a bus or have the experiences come to us. I spend the remainder of my time on campus e-mailing or calling about possible field trips or classroom experiences, hoping to provide something special for my students.

6:10 p.m.

I finally arrive home and am greeted by a warm hug and an unbelievable dinner: crusted chicken, mushrooms, and peeled carrot slices.
Town Crier reporter Traci Newell shadowed Mountain View High School counselor Marti McGuirk last month. Following is her account of a day in the life of McGuirk.

High school students have so many questions as they head toward graduation. Which college should I attend? When should I take the SAT? Why are those girls bullying me? How do I balance my sports and school work? High school counselors usually have answers – and more. They devote their days to solving students’ myriad concerns.

“Adolescence is a crazy time in terms of social stress and finding your place and figuring out where you fit and who you want to be and who you don’t want to be,” said Marti McGuirk, Mountain View High School counselor. “The academics of high school are way harder than ever, and I think a lot of kids don’t have the bandwidth to manage everything.”

A typical day for a high school counselor is anything but. “There is the surprise factor – things you never know are coming,” McGuirk said. “The meltdown because of a bad test score or a breakup with a significant other. Our day is never dull.”

At Mountain View High School, each of the five full-time counselors is assigned approximately 385 students. They schedule meetings with each and their parents throughout the year (starting with seniors and working their way to the freshmen) to check on academics and make sure they are on track toward graduation and beyond. McGuirk said she sees a spectrum of students every day, from high-achievers to those struggling to pass. Some students come to her office weekly, others just a few times a year. During the scheduled appointments, McGuirk and her fellow counselors address the student’s grades and progress in each class. McGuirk said she tries to help the students understand why they aren’t doing well in a particular class.

“What do you think gets in the way of your being successful?” McGuirk asked one of her struggling students last month. “Talk to me about what your routine is for homework.” The counselors discuss study habits and suggest strategies the students can use to improve their productivity. McGuirk often accesses the student’s grades on the computer and reviews them with the student. She will ask questions about specific teachers – such as whether they work well with the student and if the student needs extra help in the class. “A lot of times it is hard to figure out how to support the kids who are struggling and to help them take accountability for their stuff,” McGuirk said. “Lots of them would prefer that I manage things for them – it is hard to get them to want to do things themselves.” She said it’s vital to get students to understand where
they are in school and how it affects where they are going. “Developmentally, it is hard for them,” McGuirk said. “They can’t see 24 hours in front of them, let alone a year from now, how their behavior now is going to shape their futures.”

Although the job is difficult, McGuirk said it’s rewarding as well. “The coolest thing is the relationship you build with the kids and their families,” she said. “For some families, I am on their third or fourth child, I have known them for the entire time I have been in this career.” It’s a career that often shapes lives. “Helping the kids get into college is awesome,” McGuirk said. “It is nice to know that on some level, big or small, I helped them get there.”

McGuirk’s job requires staying current with all the colleges’ requirements, so they can direct students toward the appropriate classes, log enough community-service hours, take the right exams, etc. It can lead to stress for students. Helping them manage stress is a major part of a counselor’s job, according to McGuirk. She also spends time making sure parents know their children have several options and that the “big name” college isn’t the only path to success.

The counselors at Mountain View High dispense time-management sheets to students, who then define how much time each activity should take. Balance is key, McGuirk said. “I see a decent amount of kids who are on the verge of melting down or are,” she said. “I talk with them about priorities and how to use their time differently so they can have some time to just be.” One question McGuirk asks her students is, Are you leaving enough time for yourself? “High school is amazing,” she said, “if you have some time to have fun and be a happy human.”

For students dealing with serious mental challenges, such as suicidal thoughts, McGuirk said the school counselors refer them to Community Health Awareness Council counselors, who are trained to help students with serious personal problems. In addition to the academic stress students face on a daily basis, McGuirk said technology has made the high school experience all the more difficult socially. “What I wish more parents were aware of is the insidiousness of technology,” she said. “Most people would be shocked to know how much bullying and cruelty goes on, on social networking sites. Lots of kids are getting these awful messages that they never would have heard before, because technology makes it so easy to talk trash about someone.” McGuirk said she regularly sees students hurt by something someone wrote about them on Facebook or another site.

McGuirk and the other counselors have much ground to cover with students, and administrators like Keith Moody, Mountain View High’s principal, appreciate their contributions. “I was a counselor before I was an administrator, and I am totally impressed with our counselors and their knowledge base to help,” he said. “They provide a tremendous service to our students, getting them on the right track to get into the school they wish. I don’t think we could come close to providing what this community expects without counselors. They are invaluable.”
Computer Research: Career Narratives in Education and Childcare

Students conduct additional research on the career they read about in the Career Narrative activity, using a career database.

PREP

- Explore the following career database websites and choose one for this activity:
  - www.careerzone.ny.gov — The New York State career database
  - www.careercruising.com — A subscription-based career database. Requires a login and password. Many programs have subscriptions to this database.
- Choose a career from the database and be prepared to navigate to, explore and discuss this example career with students.

MATERIALS

- Researching Careers Online worksheet

EXPLAIN

1. If students have not previously used the database you have chosen to use for this activity, give a brief introduction to the website (refer to Career Database Lessons in Unit 2 for database information). Emphasize the ways the database is organized and how students can use it to find careers.

2. Ask students to navigate to the website. Look at a sample career as a class, discussing what information is included and how it is organized.

3. Distribute Researching Careers Online worksheet. Ask students to explore careers related to the one they read about in the Career Narratives and complete the worksheet.

4. If time remains, students can research the career of their choice, paraphrasing the information they find.
Researching Careers Online

Use the career database to answer the questions below.

1. What are some careers that are similar or related to the career narrative you read in the previous lesson? Find at least 6 and list them below:

2. Choose one of the careers you listed above. Write four questions you would like answered about this career.

3. Research the career listed above, and write the answers, in your own words, to the questions you wrote in #2.
Writing Activity Series: A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist

Students read a two-part narrative from a school psychologist, then complete a three-paragraph writing activity describing her work and their own interest in Education careers. Peer edits and revision activities are included as optional extensions. Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.

ACTIVITIES IN THIS SERIES

3.1 • A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part 1
3.2 • A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part 2
3.3 • Writing Activity: School Psychologist
3.4 • Extension Activity — Peer Editing and Revision
A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part One

Students read and discuss a day in the life of Justine, a school psychologist working in an alternative high school and in an Early Childhood setting, in preparation for a writing activity.

PREP

- Read Parts 1 and 2 of A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist and discussion guidelines.
- Be prepared to explain vocabulary: proficiency, buffer, cognitive delays, validating, to trump prevention

MATERIALS

- A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part One

EXPLAIN

1. Today you will practice your reading skills by reading a narrative about a school psychologist who works with alternative high school students and also with very young children. What might be positive and negative about working people from two different age groups?
   - Positive: get variety in your work life; get to use lots of different strategies and skills.
   - Negative: hard to constantly adjust your focus; maybe you have more strengths working with one of these populations and feel not as comfortable with the other.

2. If you were going to interview a school psychologist about her job, what are some questions you would ask? Write the responses on the board. Students might say:
   - What hours do you work?
   - What do you do in a typical day?
   - What is most difficult about your job?
   - What do you like about your job?
   - How much money do you make?
   - Why did you decide to become a school psychologist?

3. Distribute A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part 1 and ask students to read and annotate it, marking parts of the narrative that relate to the questions on the board.
A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part One

by Angie McIntyre

Adapted from www.cultofpedagogy.com/school-psychologist/

Justine splits her time as a school psychologist between early childhood education and an alternative high school (AHS), both of which are housed in the same building. Justine’s students are representative of the school district, which includes a wide range of socioeconomic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The AHS also houses a large population of recent refugees with limited English proficiency.

Justine supports two very different populations from this office: young toddlers and preschoolers just starting on their educational paths, and near-adult students hoping to earn a diploma. Today is technically an Alternative High School (AHS) day, but Justine will likely engage with both settings, as she usually does. The only barrier separating Justine’s babies from her big kids is a flight of stairs, which doesn’t provide much of a buffer between the two worlds she serves.

She begins by answering a few e-mails, items that have piled up overnight from teachers, parents, a school social worker and her vice principal. As she scans her inbox, Justine thinks about a recent National Public Radio article about the healthy work/life balance in Denmark, and briefly thinks about moving her husband and two young children to Copenhagen, the nation’s capitol. Maybe next year.

Justine clicks open an e-mail she’s been avoiding, one from a high school special education teacher who works with students with significant cognitive delays. The teacher is concerned about the plan Justine helped develop for a student whose problem behaviors include swearing, threatening and hitting
staff and students. The teacher doesn’t think the expectations for the student are high enough and says the plan isn’t fair to the rest of her students. Reading between the lines, Justine infers that the teacher is sick and tired of dealing with the student, and she wants him out of her classroom for good. Situations like this are one of the toughest parts of the job because they force psychologists to play the “bad guy.” While she knows the teacher is stretched and stressed, Justine advocates for the student.

After consulting with one of the school’s social workers, Justine writes a carefully worded response to the teacher, validating her concerns, thanking her for her help and patience, and explaining that it will take time for the student’s behavior to improve. Taking the utmost care not to upset the hardworking, overtired teacher, she asks another colleague to review the email before ultimately sending it off.

Leaving a few unanswered e-mails for later, Justine heads to a meeting for one of Education’s hottest new approaches to guiding and sustaining students—Positive Behavior Initiatives And Supports (PBIS). For most school employees, PBIS is both a blessing and a curse—it requires a great deal of work up front, but it can do wonders for school climate and morale when implemented correctly. As the psychologist for the alternative high school, Justine leads the PBIS team. At today’s meeting, she presents her colleagues with the data for office discipline referrals. The purpose of the data is to celebrate successes and target areas for improvement, but the teachers—battle-hardened and stretched thin—are struggling to stay positive today. Instead, they use the meeting as a venting session about student behavior. Justine gives them some time and space to share their frustration; then she tries valiantly to get the meeting back on track. During her ten years of practice, she has learned that admiring a problem rarely solves it. She would like to engage in more proactive work with the students, families and staff, but crisis management always trumps prevention. And new crises are waiting for her when she leaves the PBIS meeting.
**DISCUSS**

1. **What do you know so far about what Justine does as a school psychologist? Who does she work with and what is her role?**
   - *She works with young children and young adults. She works closely with teachers to deal with behavior issues and possible causes for the behavior.*

2. **The writer describes an email exchange between Justine and a Special Education Teacher. What is the problem she is having with the student she discusses in the email?**
   - *The student, who is cognitively delayed, has been swearing at, threatening and hitting students and teachers.*

3. **Why did the teacher write the email?**
   - *She is objecting to the plan that she and Justine created for working with the student. She thinks the plan doesn’t have high enough expectations for the student, and is probably worried about disruptions to the other students in the class.*

4. **Does Justine agree with the teacher’s assessment? How does she respond to the teacher?**
   - *She doesn’t agree. She tells the teacher that he/she should expect change to happen gradually.*

5. **What steps does she take not to offend the teacher?**
   - *She words the e-mail very carefully and double-checks the tone of the e-mail with a colleague to make sure it’s not offensive.*

6. **Why does the author say that “situations like this one are one of the toughest parts of the job?”**
   - *Justine has to handle possible further disagreement between her and the teacher; she has to balance her assessment of what the best next steps are for the student with a concern not to disrespect the teacher's assessment.*

7. **What kind of meeting does Justine attend after writing the e-mail? What is her role at that meeting?**
   - *She attends a meeting to discuss a new approach called Positive Behavior Initiatives and Supports. Her role is to lead the meeting.*

8. **Prediction time: This isn’t the whole narrative. The last sentence of this section mentions that crises are waiting for Justine when she leaves the meeting. What do you think these might involve?**
A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part Two

Students read and discuss Part Two of A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist in preparation for a writing activity.

MATERIALS

- A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part Two

EXPLAIN

1. Ask the class to recall what they read in A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part One. If they have trouble recalling, use the questions below.

   Examples:
   - What is her job?
   - School psychologist working with high-school and early childhood students.
   - How has Justine spent her day so far?
   - Responding to e-mails and attending a meeting.
   - What do you think was the most satisfying part of her day so far? Why do you think so?
   - What was the most difficult part of her day so far? Why do you think so?
   - What did the author suggest is waiting for Justine after the meeting that she led?
   - New crises.

2. What were some of your predictions about the types of crises she might have to address? Write the predictions on the board.

3. Distribute A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part Two. Ask students to read and annotate this section of the narrative by underlining parts that relate to the crises and parts that are interesting, surprising or confusing. Prepare to discuss it.
A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist, Part Two

by Angie McIntyre

Adapted from www.cultofpedagogy.com/school-psychologist/

After the meeting, Justine finds a student waiting for her in her office. The student says she is pregnant, and claims she is bleeding because her mother kicked her that morning. Concerned for the student’s health and safety, Justine calls the police and explains the situation. When the police and ambulance arrive, the student makes excuses for her mother and declines to press charges. However, Justine informs police that the student has been in similar situations before; this will ensure that a domestic violence counselor meets with the student when she arrives at the hospital. After the emergency workers leave with the student, Justine updates her school principal and the students’ teachers. Then she completes the paperwork required by the district in such situations. By the time she finishes the work, she has invested two hours of her day into the unexpected crisis. While student emergencies happen with lightning-fast speed, responding to them is often slow, detailed work.

She attempts to get her day back on track, but has to respond to an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher who needs help. Justine listens as the teacher describes a student who has been hitting, kicking and biting her peers, and suggests a team meeting with the child’s service providers and family. Justine spends most of her Early Childhood work engaging in these types of conversations, or in evaluating children for special education eligibility. She wishes she had more time to work directly with the children and their teachers rather than simply evaluating them or trying to fix crises, but this time is rarely available.
After the two crises, Justine begins to write notes about both situations. As she is doing so, she is interrupted by AHS students sent to the office for low-level offenses such as refusing to do their work or using technology in class. Then a teacher calls for help with a student who is screaming curse words at her in the classroom. Justine coaxes the student into her office and talks through the situation with her. Because the student is a recent refugee with limited English, Justine calls a cultural liaison for additional support – the liaison is a community member who helps to translate the conversation. With the help of the liaison, Justine manages to calm the student enough for her to finish her day at school, avoiding suspension.

At 1:45, Justine finally manages some time at her desk, reviewing one of the files sitting on her desk, responding to email and cramming in a little lunch. The rest of her day is a mix of dealing with students referred to her by teachers, supervising the hallways, responding to emails and filling out forms.

Justine admits to herself that her workday rarely goes as well as she hopes, that her work rarely rises to the level she expects from herself. In addition to time constraints and the bureaucracy of special education, Justine and her colleagues face obstacles like racism, poverty, learning disability and substance abuse.

But during the course of her jam-packed, unpredictable day, Justine knows she has accomplished a great deal. While the payoff may not be obvious today, her hard work and dedication will make a difference. Because of today’s efforts, a vulnerable young woman now knows that someone cares about her safety. An angry, marginalized student has managed to finish her school day instead of being kicked out once again. A team of specialists has made plans to come together in support of a young child crying out for help.

Although she forgets it sometimes, Justine is passionate about school psychology, and she’s pretty great at it. Copenhagen will just have to wait.
DISCUSS

1. What was the first crisis Justine had to address in Part 2?
   - A pregnant student was hit by her mother. Justine had to calm the student and call the appropriate authorities.

2. Why did Justine inform the police that the student had been in similar situations before, even though the student did not press charges?
   - To ensure that a domestic violence counselor will meet with the student.

3. What was the second crisis that Justine dealt with?
   - She spoke with an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher who discusses a child who had been hitting, kicking and biting her peers.

4. What steps does Justine take to address the issue?
   - She suggests that the teacher schedule a team meeting with the child’s service providers and family.

5. What’s the last crisis described in this section?
   - A high school student with limited English ability is threatened with suspension for swearing at a teacher.

6. How does Justine handle this situation?
   - She calms the student and convinces her to leave the class; she calls in a community liaison to help her with translation. The student returns to the class and finishes her day.

7. What do you think is the most interesting aspect of Justine’s work? Why?

8. What were some of the other Education-related jobs you encountered in this story?
   - Teachers, school social workers, principal, community liaison.

9. What are some jobs that weren’t mentioned in this story, but were in some way involved in the work of caring for children in schools?
   - Paraprofessionals, school administrative, guidance counselors, school custodians, secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, librarians and technology assistant.

10. What did you find interesting in this narrative? What was difficult? Does this make you want to know more about any specific education jobs? Which ones?
### Writing Activity: School Psychologist

Students will respond in writing to the narrative, *A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist*, thinking about Justine’s career and their own career interests. They will complete a three-paragraph writing assignment, conduct peer reviews, and revise their writing.

*Note:* Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.

### PREP

- Review the writing assignment.
- **OPTIONAL:** Choose a writing strategy to incorporate into the activity. This could be a skill you have already introduced or are introducing for the first time. Some possible options include:
  - **Topic Sentences:** Use sentence starters/stems to help students focus on developing effective topic sentences for their paragraphs. For example:
    - *According to the article,…*
    - *The article focused on…*
    - *The key issue discussed in the article…*
  - **Paragraph Structure:** Use a Sandwich Paragraph (or other) graphic organizer to help students understand the different parts of a paragraph. See the following link or google “sandwich paragraph” for more guidance. https://missisparagraphpage.weebly.com/paragraph-sandwich.html
Transition phrases/sentences: Use transitional sentence stems/starters to help students understand strategies useful for transitioning between ideas. For example:

*In addition,*...,  
*As a result,*...,  
*First,*...  
*Second,*...  
*Third,*...  
*Finally,*...

MATERIALS


EXPLAIN

1. Today you are going to write about the reading we’ve been discussing, *A Day in the Life of a School Psychologist.* You’ll need some paper and a pen or pencil.

2. **OPTIONAL (See Prep section):** Review any applicable writing skills you have been working on, such as topic sentences, transition sentences, outlining, etc.

3. Review any applicable writing skills you have decided to focus on, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, transition sentences, etc. *(See Prep section for examples)*

4. Distribute *Writing Activity: Working as a School Psychologist* handout. Have students read and explain the instructions and then give students time to write. Allow students ample time to write their first draft in class, and let them know they will need to bring it to the next class, since they will be doing peer edits.
Writing Activity: Working as a School Psychologist

In this three-paragraph writing activity, you will write about the School Psychology profession, and how it relates to your own career interests and explorations. Write in as much detail as possible, using the template below as a guide. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, details, and examples. Make sure your sentences flow with clear logic from one idea to the next and that your paragraphs address the topic completely.

Paragraph 1: Justine’s Job

Describe Justine’s job in as much detail as possible. Make sure to include where she works, who she works with, what she does at work, and what you think she might like or dislike about her job. Include any other details about Justine’s job you think are important to understanding the work of a school psychologist.

Paragraph 2: A Crisis at School

Describe one of the three crises you read about. Be sure to include the nature of the crisis, Justine’s role in the crisis, and how she handled her role. Was she successful? Why or why not? Include any other details you think are important to understanding the work of a school psychologist. Imagine if the crisis involved someone in your family, what questions would you ask the School Psychologist?

Paragraph 3: My Interest in Education Careers

You were introduced to several different jobs in the Education sector. Write about your own interests in Education jobs. They do not have to be jobs you saw in this story. Include some questions you have about these careers. Write in as much detail as you can.

If you are not interested in the Education field, write about why you are not interested in Education sector careers and what careers you are interested in. Include some questions you have about these careers. Write in as much detail as you can.
EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Peer Editing: Working as a School Psychologist

Students engage in a revision process of reading one another’s writing, providing feedback, receiving feedback from their partner, and revising their writing based on the feedback.

PREP

• Be prepared to explain vocabulary: relevant, peer, edit, revise

MATERIALS

• Extra copies of writing assignment
• Peer Editing Worksheet and Error Log

EXPLAIN

1. Even the most successful writers have editors. Editors can catch mistakes writers have missed. Before you have someone else look at your writing, it’s always important to re-read it yourself and make sure it’s the best it can be.

2. Ask students to re-read what they have written to make sure:

   • It has at least 3 paragraphs and all the writing in each paragraph is relevant to the assignment and focused on one idea.
   • The writing is clear and easy to understand.
   • The writing is grammatically correct. It can help to read aloud or think each word to yourself.
   • There are no spelling mistakes.

   (You may want to write these on the board so students can refer to them as they re-read.)

3. If you encounter any mistakes, correct them now.
Now, write down three questions you have for your editor. These are parts of your writing that you are unsure of, for example, a question about the clarity of a certain part, or a question about whether one sentence is too long and should be split in two. Your editor is here to help you, so ask questions that will help clarify what might make your writing better.

Distribute Peer Editing Worksheet and Error Log.

Exchange your writing with a partner, read your partner’s writing and complete the following peer editing worksheet based on what you read. You will also need the assignment when completing the peer edit worksheet. Your goal is to help your partner make her writing the best it can be.

**Discussing Feedback**

When students are finished with the peer editing sheet, they should discuss all points with their partners, and give their partners the sheet. Once they are finished, they should switch speaking and listening roles, so that both students’ writing is discussed. Once both are discussed, the editor should give the writer the feedback sheet.

Students should bring their first draft and the peer edits of their own writing to the next session.

**Revision, Based on Feedback**

With their partner’s feedback in front of them, writers should make changes to their writing on the first draft or on an additional sheet as necessary. The teacher circulates to check progress and answer questions. Pairs should continue to sit together in case they have questions for one another.

**Final Draft**

Using revisions, students write final drafts, at computers or by hand. Students turn in the first draft, peer edit worksheet, revision notes and final draft by the end of the class.

**A Celebration of Writing: Sharing Excerpts**

As the teacher circulates, she selects components of students’ writing that are particularly effective and asks the writer to share with the class, discussing as a class what made these parts particularly effective.
Peer Editing Worksheet

Complete this sheet based on your reading of your partner’s writing.

Editor ____________________________
Date ____________________________
Writer ____________________________

A particularly effective part of this writing was:

PARAGRAPH ONE
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:
PARAGRAPH TWO
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:

PARAGRAPH THREE
This paragraph was about:

It was / was not (circle one) closely related to the assignment because:

It was / was not complete because:
## Error Log

Complete the chart below to help your partner refine his or her writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following grammatical errors:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>Why they are incorrect:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following problems with organization:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>Why this was a problem:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I found the following parts unclear:</th>
<th>Where I found them:</th>
<th>What made these parts unclear:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When we’re children, we’re taught by our parents that if we behave, everything will work out fine. So, [we think] people who have a problem must have made a serious mistake. Why should we then help them? If you ever decide to help people who are in trouble you need the courage to face the opposition of your friends and family members.

—Miep Gies