

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS  
 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

<p><b>TEACHER SKILLS AND EXPERTISE</b></p>	<p><b><u>INDUCTION OR RESIDENCY</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>TEACHER LEADER</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Pedagogical Content Knowledge</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Literature/Reading</i></b></p>	<p>First two years of teaching hired by a school district.</p> <p>How can the first-year teacher transform his formal college background in literature and connect it to the experiences, interests, abilities, and prior knowledge of her students?</p> <p>He assumes that the majority of the students comprehend rather esoteric vocabulary and literary terms; therefore, he tends to present the readings in a uniform manner, following the lecture method and recitation response so common at the university level. [Wilhelm, Jeff. (2000?) <i>You Gotta Be the Book!</i>]</p> <p>What motivates the new teacher to explore and collect content relevant multimedia and online resources available through the World-Wide Web, libraries, government and commercial sources and organizational sites?</p>	<p>A highly qualified teacher with at least 7 years' experience. Outstanding classroom teacher with diverse student populations. Able to communicate effectively with individual students, mentor new teachers, and support struggling teachers.</p> <p>The highly qualified teacher consistently maintains currency in research, which affords the ability to evaluate the usefulness of the abundant amount of "new" curricular materials, especially in reading and literacy.</p> <p>She consciously elicits students' personal responses and interpretations to the works of literature while maintaining a conducive, learning classroom environment.</p> <p>She recognizes the value of multiple sources of media to enhance the teaching of literature; e.g., visuals, technological devices, interactive tools, and artifacts of contemporary culture." (19, <i>NCTE Guidelines</i>)</p>

<p><b>Language Study</b></p>	<p>Why is there a disconnect between the research and the resources available on the teaching of grammar? The drill of grammar in isolation is not effective, but to coach students about their writing is useless unless students have some knowledge of how language works.</p> <p>How does a new teacher of English integrate grammar within the context of writing?</p> <p>How can beginning teachers be encouraged to use grammar and style checking [computer] systems in order to understand language in the context of student compositions?</p>	<p>The skilled experienced teacher is able to describe the complex dimensions of the English language while respecting the varieties of language represented by students.</p> <p>He knows the structure of English so thoroughly that he can predict possible student misconceptions.</p> <p><b>[See Grammar Alive]</b></p>
<p><b>Composition</b></p>	<p>How can beginning teachers draw upon resources for the effective teaching of writing when they have had very little experience with the composing process except for their own school writing?</p> <p>New teachers need support in developing criteria for collecting resource materials, especially in the teaching of writing.</p>	<p>Accomplished teachers understand that writing is a complex skill requiring considerable practice, re-writing, and patience. They make clear to students the variety of purposes in writing, providing many models to illustrate these differences.</p>
<p><b>Planning Instruction</b></p> <p><b>Literature/Reading</b></p>	<p>The new teacher plans lessons relying mostly on the traditional canon and the required anthology, using primarily, material that has already been taught and what is available in the Book Room. He hesitates to introduce new works that represent diverse ethnic groups. Over time the resident teacher begins to grow aware that his plans and/or the content need to be adjusted to include the students' cultural backgrounds and understandings. [Carey-Webb, Allen. (2001). <i>Literature &amp; Lives: A Response-Based Cultural Studies Approach to Teaching English.</i>]</p>	<p>The expert teacher plans lessons in extended blocs of time that are conceptually clear and builds upon original thematic units.</p> <p>She incorporates a wide variety of enrichment materials and activities to enhance the appeal to diverse students. Among these materials are traditional classic literature, but also includes adolescent literature, informational texts, and multiple literacies in technology and media.</p>

<p><b>Language Study</b></p>	<p>Within the current milieu of high stakes testing, how do new teachers avoid lapsing into the teaching of "correct" conventions of English in order to prepare students for standardized tests? Where is there time to teach extended works of literature like novels?</p> <p>How will beginning teachers be encouraged to study language in the contexts of multi-modal compositions by professionals, artists, and student authors?</p>	<p>Quality teachers acknowledge the students' rights to their own language while helping them to acquire the Standard English dialect. Using videotape to record different speech patterns in varied contexts, students can be motivated to evaluate the appropriateness of language use. From these dialect differences, students can begin to see the patterns of the English language and its ever-evolving nature.</p>
<p><b>Composition</b></p>	<p>For first-year teachers, to decide <i>what</i> to teach in writing and <i>how</i> to teach it as a process, especially on a long-term basis is very difficult. "What should be my goals? My students have problems all over the place? Where do I begin? How do I prioritize?" How can the early induction teacher use professional judgment with so little experience?</p> <p>What infrastructure will allow new teachers to engage students in multi-modal composition assignments that promote increasingly sophisticated and rhetorically sensitive uses of combinations of language, image, audio, video, and animation?</p>	<p>Experienced quality English teachers boost their students' confidence in writing by allowing them to express themselves informally first. The teachers then build on what students have to say and plan writing activities around issues that are meaningful to students but require a process of thinking. Finally through the numerous re-writes, student ideas develop with relevant supporting details, organization, coherence, and mechanics to shape the student's final draft.</p>
<p><b><u>Skills and Strategies to Engage Students</u></b></p> <p><b>Literature/Reading</b></p>	<p>Beginning teachers use whole-class discussion as the predominant mode of instructional delivery, using few multi-media resources available like visuals to vary the presentations. They gradually begin to alter strategies when they hear probing and unexpected student questions that were <i>not</i> a part of her lesson plan.</p> <p>Resident teachers, who are often given the lowest reading level students, do not know where to begin to help struggling readers negotiate complex literary pieces</p>	<p>The highly qualified teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to engage a wide spectrum of students that include: whole-class discussion as well as a number of cooperative learning small group pods. In addition, she uses supplemental materials; e.g., community-based literature, to infuse the traditional canon with selections that address diversity. The key to which type of strategy to use depends on the teacher's knowledge of her students' backgrounds and then the ability to match the appropriate strategy toward</p>

	<p>at the pace required by typical English departments.</p>	<p>active class involvement and a productive learning outcome.        Experienced teachers in reading use such strategies as guided reading that include interactive guides, engaging vocabulary strategies, basic reader response techniques like visualization, and asking key questions at timely moments.</p>
<p><b>Language Study</b></p>	<p>“Because I’m so insecure in grammar terminology, I usually feel more comfortable giving the same exercises that I was taught when I was in school.”        “When I start the class with Daily Oral Language, the kids love it as a competitive warm-up at the beginning of each class period.”</p>	<p>Highly skilled teachers have a deep knowledge base of the English language. Therefore, they can motivate classroom conversations by starting with dialects and slang to interest students in the everyday language that they are most familiar with. Then the knowledgeable teacher can also link these same language variations to make students aware of basic patterns of English as well as the conventions of Standard English, if the student so wishes to learn the latter.</p>
<p><b>Composition</b></p>	<p>Most of the writing assignments are responses to the literature. “They told us in our teacher credential classes to ignore the ‘surface’ errors, but how can I when the misspellings and bad grammar are all over the paper?”        “How do I get all of my students to write something? I have great talkers in my classroom, but getting them to write. Forget about it!”        “The students like free-writes or journals, but I don’t know how to respond to them let alone grade them. How do I handle the paper load?”        In what ways can new teachers be encouraged to engage students in discussions or composition exchanges with responsive audiences within and outside the classroom? Atwell, Nancie. (1998) <i>In The Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.</p>	<p>Accomplished teachers adapt the Writer’s Workshop mode to their classrooms because they understand the impact of student peer conferencing and feedback among themselves.        Expert teachers engage students in multi-modal compositions that include the well-integrated use of images, audio, and video technologies. The multi-modal compositions can appeal to different types of audiences in the forms of brochures, Web designs, animation, etc.</p>

<p><b><u>Assess Impact on Student Learning</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Literature/Reading</i></b></p>	<p>In reflecting on a lesson, the resident teacher usually makes sweeping overstatements like, "I think it went great!" or "It bombed today." In trying to break down the reasons for these feelings, new teachers tend to emphasize what students did or did not grasp in the reading rather than evaluating how the lesson plan could have been altered to produce a different learning outcome.</p>	<p>Quality teachers use assessment as an integral part of the instructional planning process. Through constant monitoring and keen listening to student contributions, the exceptional teacher has the ability to adjust the tone and the direction of a discussion on literature deftly in spite of well-laid lesson plans that might dictate otherwise.</p> <p>In spite of the current wave of standardized tests that absorb considerable class time, accomplished teachers maintain their integrity by following their curricular goals and inserting creatively, the necessary test preparation items and standards within the context of their planned literature focus.</p>
<p><b><i>Language Study</i></b></p>	<p>"How can my students ever get a job writing their autobiography in slang?" In spite of Modern Grammar classes that teach language differences and language change, the beginning teacher rarely trays from a pre-determined Standard English as the only accepted mode of communication, especially in written form.</p>	<p>"How do I know that the student learned what I tried to teach?" is the central question that highly qualified teachers ask themselves constantly. The range can cover English language conventions to the nuances of context and appropriateness. "The students seemed engaged, but did they take away from my class, what I intended for them to learn?" "What evidence do I have that they learned anything today?" are sample tough questions they reflect on daily.</p>
<p><b><i>Composition</i></b></p>	<p>"I do not have time for writing conferences with students so I give them guidelines for writing assignments. What else can I do with such limited time?"</p> <p>"Most students don't know how to organize their papers so I give them an outline. Then we go over what a topic sentence is and then the concrete details to support the topic sentence." Beginning teachers typically assess the success of their efforts based on how closely the students' compositions approximate</p>	<p>To determine the impact on student writing, the expert teacher reflects back on her own lesson design and its objectives. Highly qualified teachers also nurture the students' abilities to assess their own growth by providing clear "...models, criteria, benchmarks, rubrics, and feedback [p 57, NBPTS]" and the use of student portfolios. Were the criteria clear from the outset? If not, were there provisions made to change the assignment "mid-stream?" Accomplished teachers frequently write out the prompts that</p>

	<p>this rather rigid organizational model given at the outset of a composition assignment.</p> <p>"How do I convince my department chair and the parents that the grades I give during the <i>process</i> of writing count just as much as the final <i>product</i>? I'm not sure I believe in the process part myself?"</p> <p>How can new teachers be encouraged to assess student learning through more than traditional means to include analyses of multi-modal compositions using content materials?</p>	<p>they will be giving to their students either prior to or during the class writing time. They model their own writing and revise frequently in front of the class.</p> <p>Quality teachers use a wide variety of strategies to make formative assessments in composition including technology-rich methods; e.g. the computer's "ability to manipulate text easily can blur the distinctions among composing, editing, and revising." (p 43 EA/ELA NBPTS)</p>
<p><b><u>Professional Learning Community</u></b></p>	<p>Unless the new teacher is paired with an on-site mentor, her pattern is to remain in the classroom and to focus on the day-to-day duties of classroom life. If there are occasions whereby the school encourages inter-faculty meetings and socials, the new teacher oftentimes bonds with other new teachers who were hired in the same year. However, if she is to build a professional relationship with another English teacher, the overture usually stems from the established person on-site as the beginning teacher oftentimes feels too vulnerable to reach out for help.</p> <p>Any contact with parents takes the form of prescribed interactions like: attending Back- to School Night, making parent telephone calls, and issuing progress reports.</p> <p>To build professional relationships outside the school is unusual but is possible. Some Colleges of Education recommend attending a local English/Reading conference as part of their observation hours, resulting in the teacher-preparation candidate's discovery of valuable teaching resources, inspiring speakers, and friendly teaching colleagues in English/Language Arts.</p>	<p>Quality teachers are outstanding in the classroom, but they also have proven verbal/written abilities that are demonstrated in their communication with parents and peer faculty. Result: teacher-leaders are a valuable resource in initiating reading and writing across the curriculum at the school site.</p> <p>They also demonstrate leadership skills by mentoring new teachers and extending assistance to experienced but struggling teachers.</p> <p>The highly qualified teacher understands the necessity for collaboration with a learning community to solve school problems and to help define and re-define school policies.</p> <p>Because the teacher-leader knows how to use the community support systems surrounding the local school culture, she can help provide the best practices of technology use in the English/Language Arts classes.</p> <p>The teacher-leader's effort to bring about collegiality extends well beyond the local school context to the district level by serving on various curriculum committees.</p> <p>Other forms of participating in the larger learning community include: serving as a master teacher for post-secondary institutions in order to help student teachers, by sharing knowledge through presentations at professional conferences, and through the publication of articles in professional journals.</p>